

PRESENT-DAY

# Y.M.C.A.— CHURCH RELATIONS

IN THE UNITED STATES

By  
J. D. DAVIS

267.3 P39p 63-21239  
Pence  
Present-day Y.M.C.A.-Church  
relations in the United States

267.3 P39p 63-21239  
Pence Gift  
Present-day Y.M.C.A.-Church  
relations in the United States

kansas city



public library

kansas city, missouri

Books will be issued only  
on presentation of library card.  
Please report lost cards and  
change of residence promptly.  
Card holders are responsible for  
all books, records, films, pictures  
or other library materials  
checked out on their cards.

KANSAS CITY, MO. PUBLIC LIBRARY



0 0001 0301931 1

---





PRESENT-DAY  
Y.M.C.A.-CHURCH RELATIONS  
IN THE UNITED STATES



PRESENT-DAY  
Y.M.C.A.-CHURCH RELATIONS  
IN THE UNITED STATES

*A Diagnostic Report*

*Prepared by*

OWEN E. PENCE

in consultation with the Committee of the Bureau of Records, Studies and Trends of the National Board, Y.M.C.A., as a summary and critique of studies of Y.M.C.A.-Church Relations conducted under the Bureau's auspices between 1940 and 1948.

Copyright, 1948, by  
The International Committee of  
Young Men's Christian Associations



PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

## Foreword

---

Here is an effort, in which many have shared, to face with objectivity the existing relationships between the Y.M.C.A. and the Churches. In the light of the historical identification of the Association with organized Protestantism, the trend toward a much more inclusive orientation deserves careful thought.

The rapid secularization of society has encouraged every tendency toward the development of standards and goals broad enough and general enough to be inclusive of a variety of faiths. It is of vast importance that the Y.M.C.A., through its many local and regional organizations, should consider the implications of its present relations with the Churches, and explore and analyze the religious alternatives which it confronts.

This book records the sincere efforts of a very considerable number of people, including ministers and churchmen as well as Y.M.C.A. officers and members, to state the facts and to explore their implications. It confronts not only the problems of relationship between the Protestant Churches and a Protestant Association, but also it concerns itself with the question of the extent to which that Association should serve as a fellowship of faiths, Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish, and, in addition, it asks how far the Association should go in offering its services without a definitely religious emphasis to those in the community ready to respond only to the secular aspects of its program.

KANSAS CITY (MO.) PUBLIC LIBRARY  
6321239

It is my sincere hope that many in the Y.M.C.A.'s and the Churches will find this book a stimulus to more careful thought upon these vital matters, and that its forthrightness and honesty will help to provide the foundation for a more significant and realistic co-operation in the creation and further development of spiritual values in American communities.

ARTHUR L. SWIFT, JR.,

*Chairman*, Bureau of Records,  
Studies and Trends

Professor of Church and Community  
Union Theological Seminary  
New York, 1948

# Contents

---

	PAGE
Foreword, by <i>Arthur L. Swift, Jr.</i> . . . . .	v
CHAPTER	
1. Introduction . . . . .	1
Why a diagnostic report?—Why important now?—Recent studies.—Let the facts speak for themselves.	
2. Background and Heritage . . . . .	4
Y.M.C.A.-Church relations in the making (1851-1865)—Y.M.C.A. program and relationships assume a definite character (1865-1900)—The situation at the turn of the century—Developments in the early twentieth century—Y.M.C.A. policy clarified (1910-1917)—Y.M.C.A.-Church relations in World War I—Post-war relations in local communities—Relationships with denominations—General movements affecting Y.M.C.A.-Church relations—Relations in local communities (1925-1944)—National and international relationships (1925-1944)—Problem areas in Y.M.C.A.-Church relations.	
3. The Religious Affiliations of Y.M.C.A. Constituency . . . . .	16
An early study—The First Constituency Study—The Second Constituency Study—Observations— <i>First diagnosis</i> .	
4. The Religious Affiliations of Y.M.C.A. Board Members . . . . .	24
Who are the board members?—Balanced composition—Why Catholics are chosen—Observations— <i>Second diagnosis</i> .	
5. The Religious Affiliations of the Y.M.C.A. Secretaries . . . . .	33
Active staff in 1948—Protestants and others—Look at the record—Evangelical versus Christian—Observations— <i>Third diagnosis</i> .	

6. Local Y.M.C.A.-Church Activities and Relationships 44  
*Concerning Objectives:* Common aims of Churches and Associations—Distinctive aims of Associations—Distinctive aims of the Churches—Observations. *Concerning Persons:* Competition for time—Conflict in use of laymen—Leadership training possibilities—Observation. *Concerning Methods:* Formal religious features—The place of associate members—Adjusting methods to meet youth needs—Observation. *Concerning finance:* Observation—*Fourth diagnosis.*
7. Y.M.C.A.-Church Council Relationships . . . . . 64  
Y.M.C.A. Representation in Church Councils—Church Council representation in Y.M.C.A. Boards—Co-operative activities—General conclusions—*Fifth diagnosis.*
8. Church Council Representatives Speak for Themselves 87  
Thesis—Reexamination and realignment considered urgent—Closer functional co-operation urged and queried—Proposed restudy of Y.M.C.A. Board composition—Is the Y.M.C.A. a part of the Protestant ecumenical movement?—Attitudes that facilitate and prevent complete understanding—Things that might be done together—*Sixth diagnosis.*
9. A Comparative Report on Y.M.C.A. Relationships with Councils of Churches and Councils of Social Agencies . . . . . 100  
Date of organization—Council structures and Y.M.C.A. participation—Projects of the Councils on which Y.M.C.A. co-operation was sought or offered—Projects of the Y.M.C.A. on which Council co-operation was sought or offered—Informal consultations—Joint use of facilities—Attitudes—What is the Y.M.C.A.? (Some characterizations)—*Seventh diagnosis.*
10. The USO Episode in Y.M.C.A.-Church Relationships 120  
How the Y.M.C.A. interpreted its USO partnership—Protestant? Assuredly!—How Church leaders interpreted Y.M.C.A.-USO relationships—Co-operation under war conditions—Two editorials—The issue—The issue restated—Toward a lasting satisfaction—*Eighth diagnosis.*
11. The Catholic Aspect of Y.M.C.A.-Church Relationships . . . . . 140  
Y.M.C.A. attitudes toward Catholics—Catholic attitude toward the Y.M.C.A.—The wider context—The growing Catholic-Protestant tension in the United States—Toward understanding—*Ninth diagnosis.*



12.	Interfaith Aspects of Y.M.C.A.-Church Relationships	166
	We are what we are—Tactics and dynamics—What alternatives exist?—Opinions differ—On not being naïve— <i>Tenth diagnosis.</i>	
13.	Summary and Final Diagnosis . . . . .	180
	Concerning the Church and the Churches as parties to the relationship—Concerning the community as conditioning the relationship—Concerning the trend in the Y.M.C.A. itself as affecting its Church-related behavior—Concerning the Y.M.C.A. as a distinctive, historic Movement with a mission.	
	Appendix . . . . .	194



## CHAPTER ONE

# Introduction

---

The Young Men's Christian Association is not a church. It has never sought to be one.

No church, today, considers itself a Young Men's Christian Association and, presumably, none seeks to be one.

Yet between Church and Association, today, as for nearly a century, there exists a relationship so commonly accepted as almost to be taken for granted, and so unique as to require considerable perspective and discrimination not to be misunderstood.

### ***Why a Diagnostic Report?***

The relation between churches and Associations, though of long standing, has itself changed considerably with time. How the relationship has changed and in what degree, why it has changed and is still changing, are rather complex matters. That is why perspective and careful judgment are necessary to one who would understand them. That is why a "diagnostic" approach is now needed, and why this report has been prepared. Its purpose is to help leaders of Associations and churches better to understand what the present-day relationship actually is, whence it has been derived, and the probable direction of its further development.

This diagnostic report is not a history. Written in the present and of the present it must, however, for the sake of perspective, include reference to what has been. Nor is such a report a prophecy, though it must have some regard for attitudes in the present that are not likely to change quickly, and for present

structures certain to define if not determine probabilities for a long time to come.

The method of a diagnostic report is that of critical scrutiny, made in the light of the facts now available, and of resulting judgments checked by competent critics. As a diagnostic report, it does not suggest a return to some former idealized position, if such were possible, nor propose and argue for a particular solution or course ahead. It seeks rather to marshal a somewhat wider range of facts than has usually been brought to bear on the subject hitherto, believing that it lies within the peculiar capacity of the Association, as an autonomous Christian lay movement, to determine its own course more wisely than it can be laid out by others, once the relevant conditions and circumstances are clearly set forth and fairly understood.

To present these relevant considerations and to seek their sympathetic understanding is, therefore, the principal purpose of this report.

### ***Why Important Now?***

War years are years of concentration, when all of the instrumentalities of society are called upon to contribute their utmost to the common struggle. Neither churches nor Associations are exempt. Postwar years are years of reorientation, when no agency of human expression or human betterment may merely resume what it was doing when war necessities intervened, or assume that its responsibilities and relationships remain as before. There have been new learnings, by organizations as well as by individuals. New needs are everywhere apparent. New urgencies appear. New priorities must be accepted. New forms of co-operation may be required. New dimensions of tolerance and fellowship find expression. Significant new alignments as well as profound reaffirmations may be called for.

Unprecedented activity within and between the churches has been evident in recent years, as great communions have attempted to respond promptly to the needs of the suffering and destitute, and gird themselves for greater impact and productivity in the field of their chosen service. The urge to more effective union of spirit and effort has been greatly intensified. The appeal for local as well as national and international con-

fidence and collaboration has been heard and heeded. The delayed peace settlements, and continuing political, economic, and cultural maladjustments, challenge all organizations, including the churches, to seek effective combinations and reinforcement of their own efforts with those of others—in the local community as in the world at large. No organization can live to itself alone.

### **Recent Studies**

In a sense, this report centers chiefly in several Y.M.C.A. studies of recent years dealing with one or another phase of the relationships problem. Few of these studies have been exhaustive; all have been suggestive. They are presented in summary form, chiefly in Chapters III to IX. A complete listing of these studies will be found on page 181.

### ***Let the Facts Speak for Themselves***

There is always some risk in presenting factual information, particularly when it is assembled from various sources and under differing circumstances. The risk lies in not recognizing the relation of particular sets of facts to other facts and considerations, and in thus failing to draw correct inferences from each body of data as part of an interrelated whole.

In this report, which represents an attempt to understand what existing Y.M.C.A.-Church relations really are, it should be recognized that a term like "diagnosis" implies trying to understand a situation or condition *as a whole*. As such, facts can be a reliable guide only when proportions are accurate and perspective clear.

Let us then turn to the facts, item by item. We shall try, so far as possible, to keep the attention upon the local community, adjusting our perspective as the picture takes shape. We shall proceed to present, as objectively as possible, whatever data are available to throw light upon the main subject of this report. At the conclusions of sections or chapters, after short lists of comments or observations, will appear successive portions of a progressive and cumulative diagnosis which, taken together, probably represents the particular contribution of the report.

## CHAPTER TWO

# Background and Heritage

---

The immediate background of the present-day Y.M.C.A.-Church relationship cannot be understood from what is happening today alone. There must be some genuine awareness of the heritage that one hundred years of more or less close collaboration between Associations and churches represent.

Fortunately, the history of that relationship has already been examined with deep sympathy and careful objectivity by one of the most trusted of Association leaders, Mr. S. Wirt Wiley, whose *History of Y.M.C.A.-Church Relations in the United States*, published in 1944, has won wide appreciation among churchmen and Association men alike. For the present preliminary purpose, as an accepted background statement, it has seemed more satisfactory to utilize certain excellent summary statements prepared by Mr. Wiley than to attempt a parallel and less adequate treatment, or to offer merely a few "highlights" of what was in fact a long-time development both complex and engrossing.

Accordingly, except as indicated in the text itself, the following pages of this chapter present these summaries under the original chapter headings of Mr. Wiley's treatment, and in his own language, in the confidence that only he who reads thoughtfully through this relatively brief sequence covering a full hundred years of significant development will be equipped mentally and spiritually to consider the results of recent studies presented thereafter.

## Y.M.C.A.-CHURCH RELATIONS IN THE MAKING (1851-1865)

(Wiley: Chapter I, page 14)

During the first fifteen years, the Y.M.C.A.'s in the United States had allied themselves with the evangelical Protestant churches; had developed methods of co-operating with local churches, especially through evangelism; had taken a leading part in an extraordinary nation-wide religious revival led by laymen; and had set up an organization, the Christian Commission, for serving the Union armed forces in the Civil War that had received the co-operation and support of Protestant churches throughout the North. Rather a remarkable beginning! Nevertheless, anxiety had been created in the minds of many members of the clergy lest the Y.M.C.A. become another Church or an organization competing with the churches.

## Y.M.C.A. PROGRAM AND RELATIONSHIPS ASSUME A DEFINITE CHARACTER (1865-1900)

(Wiley: II-31)

During the first fifty years, the North American Y.M.C.A. had continuously asserted that it was a servant of the Protestant evangelical churches and had vested the control of its local, international, state, and training organizations in members of these churches. It had taken steps to insure against becoming another Church itself or assuming the distinctive functions of a Church. While safeguarding its own distinctively lay character and eschewing ecclesiastical control, the Association had honored and sought the counsel and co-operation of the clergy, though perhaps not as much as it should have done. It had provided facilities, fellowship, constructive activities, some religious education, and training in lay service for the young men (and for the boys) of the churches, supplementing what the churches were in a position themselves to provide. It had made it a major purpose to feed young men into the membership of the churches, but the results had often been disappointing. It had inaugurated an agency through which Protestantism extended its service to soldiers in the Civil War and had itself served as such an agency in the Spanish-American War. It had undertaken a comprehensive service in segregated groups of young men, including men of the regular Army and Navy, railroad men, and college students. It had developed still other specialized types of Associations among American Indians, rural youth, and Negro young men and boys, by which the interests of the churches were served in a unique manner.

There were other equally important, though less measurable

contributions, that the Y.M.C.A. had made to the Church. In his address to the Jubilee Convention, President Faunce said:

"The Association . . . has reacted on the churches in certain obvious and notable ways. It has to a remarkable degree developed the power of organization among the laity. . . . The Association has also enabled the churches to achieve and express a marvelous Christian unity. . . . It has brought about a more comprehensive idea of Christianity as applied to the entire life of modern man."

Dr. Francis E. Clark, father of Christian Endeavor, added:

"Its special mission in the church is to set young men at work for young men. . . . A second special mission . . . is to put emphasis upon the symmetrical, well-rounded development of the whole man. . . . It has done more than almost any other organization to bring together the people of God in the different denominations."

#### THE SITUATION AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

(Wiley: III-38)

As the Y.M.C.A. entered its second half-century, it is clear in retrospect that changes were taking place in both the Associations and the churches that created apprehension, produced tension, and necessitated readjustments. The first horseless carriages looked very much like other carriages, but the modern automobile bears little resemblance to its prototype. So Y.M.C.A.'s, in the early years, engaged chiefly in activities that were familiar to the clergy of the churches. The early Y.M.C.A. secretaries, however different they may have felt themselves to be, to others appeared very like ministers. But the city Y.M.C.A.'s of the early 1900's, with their commodious, specially designed buildings, their fourfold programs, their "businessman" general secretaries, and their physical directors, educational directors, employment directors, and other specialists in "secular" activities, represented such a rapid metamorphosis that readjustments in relations with old friends were inevitable.

The theological controversy developing in the churches, the Institutional Church Movement, the Laymen's Missionary Movement, and the development of denominational work in universities, and the launching of denominational men's movements, such as the St. Andrew's Brotherhood of the Protestant Episcopal Churches, were developments on the part of the churches that necessitated adjustments by the Associations. The consequent tensions were still chiefly between local Y.M.C.A.'s and local churches; but the increasing aggressiveness of the International Committee, with its growing staff,



its promotional policy, and its Association Press, and the beginnings in the churches of national lay organizations and national programs for the state universities were making it necessary for the denominations and the International Committee to come to terms with each other. At the same time, these new developments were recognized by the farsighted in both the Associations and churches as providing new opportunities for co-operation, locally and nationally, in achieving their common objectives.

#### DEVELOPMENTS IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

(Wiley: IV—49)

There is danger that the discussion of tensions and strains, and of adjustments and readjustments, may have given a distorted impression of the relationships of the Y.M.C.A. and the churches during the early part of the present century. In reality, however—as revealed by the Employed Officers' Commission survey, made in 1909—the tensions and strains were only incidental to a great volume of co-operation, steadily expanding in scope and significance. Indeed, the distinctive characteristics of this period were the Y.M.C.A.'s efforts to strengthen the activities of the churches among their own men and boys, and its active co-operation with the interchurch lay movements of the time.

The outstanding impression of the period is that all the misunderstandings and conflicts that seemed possible at the turn of the century or later had been resolved by the end of the first decade. The situation had become so complicated, however, as to call for a fresh and comprehensive statement of policy by the International Convention of the Y.M.C.A.'s.

#### Y.M.C.A. POLICY CLARIFIED—1910-1917

(Wiley: V—70)

As we attempt to summarize the course that relations between the Y.M.C.A.'s and the churches had taken between 1900 and World War I, it is important to remember that it had been a period of tremendous expansion and development by all types of Y.M.C.A.'s. The number of local Associations had increased by only a little over 40 per cent; but the number of members had more than doubled, to a total of nearly three-quarters of a million. The value of buildings and permanent funds has been multiplied by more than four, and totaled about ninety-three million dollars. The number of secretaries had increased more than two and a half times, to over four thousand, and the number of laymen on boards and committees had

increased to ninety thousand. Total operating expenses, which reflected the volume of activities and services, had increased from three million to twenty million dollars annually. All this in seventeen years!

The greatest relative growth had been in the foreign (missionary) work of the American Y.M.C.A.'s. In 1917, there were nearly two hundred secretaries in foreign service. The national and state organization of the Associations (to promote and supervise work in America) had also grown diversified, and specialized, until over three hundred secretaries were employed in such service.

Certain natural consequences followed from such expansion and the evidence of public favor that was involved. One was a sense of confidence in the future of the Associations, courage to undertake big things. Another was great absorption in the development and management of their own affairs. A third consequence, which involved the relations with the churches, was greater difficulty with the problem of maintaining the traditions and former relationships of the Associations, owing to the rapid increase of leadership personnel, both volunteer and professional.

It is significant, therefore, that during this period the increasing points of contact between the Associations and the churches so generally became points of co-operation, as the activities of both became more diversified and specialized. Helpful relations to the "institutional" activities of churches were developed, rather than competition. Y.M.C.A. resources of lay and professional leadership were put at the service of the new lay organizations in local churches and of their local federations. Collaboration in the two great national laymen's movements of the period was not only willing but sometimes aggressive. The International Committee took a very active part in the Foreign Missions Conferences, of which it was a regular member, and received the active co-operation of the member boards, notably in work among Chinese students. Cordial and mutually helpful relations developed with the new Federal Council of Churches and with the Home Missions Council. Toward the close of the period, the conferences with five official and four other independent interdenominational agencies, together with five denominational brotherhoods and ten denominational young people's movements, had resulted in good understanding and the formulation of principles to guide their relations in the path of co-operation. Through extended conference, the basis of co-operation between the Y.M.C.A., the Y.W.C.A. and the student work of the leading denominations had been worked out and stated in much

detail. It is perhaps most significant that these developments were all in accord with or were the fruits of recommendations of a commission of the Employed Officers' Association (1909) and another of the International Committee, which resulted in a comprehensive statement of policy by the International Convention of Y.M.C.A.'s (1913).

The Y.M.C.A., as a rule accepted the responsibility of taking the initiative in working out adjustments to new and changing circumstances, but it was met by cordial response on the part of the church leadership. The great expansion in the resources and work of the Y.M.C.A. itself was in large measure due to the active support of both church laymen and clergy. It was a part of the strategy of the short-term building campaigns of the Associations to secure both the endorsement and active support of the ministers of the Protestant churches.

There had been noted in this period also the beginning of relations, in the foreign outreach of the American Associations, with branches of the Eastern Orthodox Churches and the emergence of the question as to future relations of Roman Catholic laymen within the Y.M.C.A. and of the attitude of the Catholic Churches toward the Associations. These matters will assume increasing importance in later chapters. •

#### Y.M.C.A.-CHURCH RELATIONS IN WORLD WAR I

(Wiley: VI-87)

At the close of the war, the relationships between the Y.M.C.A. and most of the Protestant denominations appear on the whole to have been good. It is important, however, to summarize the sources of misunderstanding and strain to which the Commission\* called attention:

1. To the Y.M.C.A. lay mind, promptness of action in this particular emergency seemed most important, while to officials of the denominations consultation with the churches seemed more important.
2. The Y.M.C.A. assumed a right to represent the Protestant evangelical churches in this particular service because of its historic relation to these churches, because of past precedent in the serv-

---

\* Commission on the Relation of the Y.M.C.A. to the Churches, President William Douglas Mackenzie, Chairman, which reviewed Y.M.C.A.-Church relations during the war period, including background relationships, and reported to the 1919 International Convention.

ice of the armed forces, and because of its specialized competence in such service; whereas many under ecclesiastic responsibility felt that it did not have the right to act in the large capacity it did without a mandate from the churches.

3. The Y.M.C.A. prized its independence of ecclesiastical control because of the flexibility, freedom of action, and breadth of relationships it made possible; while many church leaders felt that an organization through which the churches found it necessary in large measure to serve the armed forces should be under at least partial control by the denominations.
4. The Y.M.C.A., in its publicity and its money raising, was primarily concerned with winning moral and financial support for this particular unprecedented service which it had undertaken; while church leaders generally were eager to have the world told also that, through the Y.M.C.A., the Protestant churches were serving the armed forces, even as the Catholic Church was serving them in a more limited way through the Knights of Columbus. Here was a real dilemma for an organization that had undertaken a service of such proportions that it required the support of much more than the Protestant constituency.

There were, of course, other sources of irritation and tension, but these major sources may well be kept in mind as we trace the relationships during the years ahead, especially when the United States becomes involved in another world war.

#### POST-WAR RELATIONS IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES

(Wiley: VII—100)

As one reads the reports of both the Mackenzie and the Massachusetts Commissions, of which digests have been given on preceding pages, the most striking impression is that of widespread appreciation and approval of the Y.M.C.A.'s by ministers and leading church laymen at that time. To one acquainted with the diverse desires of different denominations, the report of the Mackenzie Commission is hardly believable when it says "at least nine-tenths of the letters received from ministers and laymen put emphasis upon the cordial and appreciative esteem in which the Association was held."

One gleans, from the large number of criticisms received from the few real critics and of suggestions from others, that the desire was for still larger "returns" to the churches from the great buildings that had been provided for the Y.M.C.A.'s in such particulars as these:

1. More dormitory residents and other members related to the churches.
2. More help to the churches in developing programs and training leaders for their church groups of boys and young men.
3. More use of Y.M.C.A. buildings by church groups as such and for other church activities.
4. More active participation in church work by individual Y.M.C.A. secretaries.
5. More religious influence. (There was a difference of opinion regarding more religious activities.)

There was considerable desire for some participation by the churches as such in the control of the Associations and, withal, for a more "precise delimitation of the spheres of influence and activity of the Y.M.C.A.'s and the churches respectively."

#### RELATIONSHIPS WITH DENOMINATIONS

(Wiley: VIII, summarized by present writer)

The Mackenzie Commission, in a notable report to the International Convention in 1919, emphasized the particular need of improved understanding and better channels of consultation between the Y.M.C.A. and the denominations, functioning as national organizations. Recommendations were made, and adopted by the Convention, that (1) "in the selection and training of secretaries . . . thorough instruction" . . . be given "in the religious aims of the Association, and thorough training in the Scriptures, Christian doctrine, and the history and meaning of the Church and of the churches to all its secretaries . . ."; and (2) that the time had come "to open direct negotiations with the leading denominations known as evangelical, for a careful study of the relations obtaining between the evangelical churches and the Association." A Commission was authorized to enter into such negotiations.

The resulting conferences between denominational and Association leaders, conducted by this new body called the "Commission on the Approach to the Churches," included representatives of the general interests of both groups, and of such specialized interests as boys, student, and foreign work. Reporting on these discussions at the International Convention in 1922, "the Commission proposed certain principles of co-operation to be applied at local, state and national levels, as follows:

1. Recognition by the Y.M.C.A. of the primacy of the Church and the churches.

2. Maintenance of the Associations' independence of ecclesiastical control.
3. Agreement between the Associations and the churches as to what they should expect from one another.
4. Annual conference between the Associations and representatives of the churches before projecting plans and work for the year."

Further, the Convention approved the Commission's proposal that the denominations be invited to appoint standing committees on the Y.M.C.A. or to designate committees already in existence for such purpose, and also that they be asked each to name one member of a general counseling commission with which the International Committee or its executive body might confer "at least annually" on such problems of relationship as were national in scope.

Despite the preoccupation of Association leaders with the Constitutional Convention and the organization of the National Council, overtures were made to all denominations then members of the Federal Council of Churches. In due time, thirteen denominations named members to the General Counseling Commission, which held its first meeting late in 1924, with ten denominations represented.

#### GENERAL MOVEMENTS AFFECTING Y.M.C.A.-CHURCH RELATIONS

(Wiley: IX-137)

When the National Council and its Counseling Commission of the Churches began to function, late in 1924, they were confronted with a situation far more complicated than they realized. The relationships of the Associations and local churches had become greatly diversified with the multiplying activities of both. Other agencies serving the churches were actual, though not unfriendly, competitors of the Associations. Relationships between the national organizations of the Associations and of the churches had become numerous and complicated; moreover, they had not received nearly so much study as had local relationships. Many churches were suffering from a great internal Fundamentalist-Modernist theological controversy, which had its repercussions upon their relationships with the Y.M.C.A. Thus the prevailing atmosphere was not congenial to the central objective that the Y.M.C.A. and the churches held in common. This was primarily responsible for the many instances of mutual criticism. At the same time, both the Y.M.C.A. and the denominations had been pushing ambitious plans of expansion in various phases of their work, sometimes threatening competition.

Simultaneously, four great developments were in process, all of which were profoundly affecting the future setting of Y.M.C.A.-Church relations: the federation movement among the Protestant churches; the community organization movement among social agencies; the interconfessional development in the Y.M.C.A.; and the ecumenical movement among the churches.

#### RELATIONS IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES (1925-1944)

(Wiley: X-158)

It becomes clear from the record that relations between Y.M.C.A.'s and churches in local communities and on individual campuses have undergone much change during the last twenty years. Whether there is more or less co-operation, it would be impossible to determine. The changes in circumstances and consequently in forms of co-operation make exact comparison impossible. Generally speaking, the churches appear to be less dependent upon the Y.M.C.A.'s than formerly, or at least their dependence is limited to a narrower area of activities and services. Within that narrower area, co-operation appeared in the survey of 1934 to be growing in volume and significance in residential communities. There was needed, obviously, a fresh study of these communities on a national scale.

Clearly, co-operation by the Y.M.C.A.'s with the federated agencies of the churches has been taking the place of much direct co-operation with local churches. There has now been enough experience in relationships with these agencies to warrant a careful restudy of the distinctive roles that they and the Y.M.C.A.'s may most helpfully play in the future.

#### NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS (1925-1944)

(Wiley: XI-183)

The Young Men's Christian Association nears the end of its first century, in which it early adopted the motto: "That they may be one." For one hundred years the Association has provided Christian fellowship for the men of all denominations and latterly of all confessions. As an organization, it has given service to all the churches that would accept it and has worked for co-operation among the ecclesiastical bodies. It has seen the major Protestant churches come into federation, and now it sees them and the churches of the first great schism drawing together. It is witnessing these and the Mother Church of Rome gradually increase co-operation in the realm of human welfare and the development of a better social order.

During these hundred years, the Association has pursued in the

main an opportunistic policy, satisfied to work out its own relationships experimentally and apparently unwilling to reduce them to formulas or statements. As the several churches within the Church Universal begin to express their unity in a definite form of ecclesiastical organizations, however, it would seem to be of greatest importance that the relationship of this great non-ecclesiastical, lay organization, which is also within the Church Universal, be clearly defined, in order that the Association may be in a position best to render the service in which it has developed special competence and in order that it may continue to be an effective pioneer in the further development of unity within the Church.

#### PROBLEM AREAS IN Y.M.C.A.-CHURCH RELATIONS

(Wiley: XII—209)

These, then, appear to be some of the problem areas or factors that have given rise to *the problem of relationships*—namely, the conflicting desires of different churches, the introduction of activities from secular sources by the Y.M.C.A.'s, the multiplication of activities and organizations by both the churches and the Associations, the relations of the Y.M.C.A.'s with the social agencies, the lay, non-ecclesiastical character of the Y.M.C.A.'s, the Federation Movement among the churches, and the increasing interconfessional composition of the Y.M.C.A.

It appears that none of these factors has necessarily been the occasion of friction or conflict, but rather that all of them have contributed to the possibility and obligation of the Y.M.C.A.'s supplementing and serving the local churches, communions, and confessions. These factors do, however, make necessary persistent goodwill, clear thinking, and action devoid of either personal or institutional selfishness, which ought always to be possible, since the church members who constitute the controlling membership of the Y.M.C.A. are part of the general membership of the churches. In its essence, the Y.M.C.A.-Church relationship is more than one of parallel institutions; it is the relationship of interpenetrating institutions, with a common basic purpose.

Co-operation has always been important to both the Y.M.C.A.'s and the churches. The Y.M.C.A.'s appear, with few exceptions, always and everywhere to have supplemented the churches usefully in the service of youth. On the other hand, the life of the Associations has been derived from the spiritual heritage of the churches. At present, the aggressiveness of governments seems to increase the value of close alliance for both the churches and the Associations,



in order to maintain religion at the heart of the service to youth. More than the interests of the institutions are at stake; the higher interests of youth are involved.

Relations between the churches and the Y.M.C.A.'s appear always to have been happiest and most fruitful when the interests of youth were kept in the foreground and institutional interests were considered only as a means to an end. This fact probably constitutes the most important single guidepost for the future of Y.M.C.A.-Church relations.

These conclusions, then, form the background and, in substantial measure, suggest the rich heritage to be kept in mind in examining available facts regarding Y.M.C.A.-Church relations today. Much of the material now to be examined was not available when the Wiley history was written. No effort has been made, it need hardly be said, to produce facts merely to lend support to one or another position expressed in that history. The facts must speak for themselves and, where they lead to deductions in any respect at variance with earlier conclusions, this will be pointed out, as will those instances where they seem to emphasize or corroborate accepted views.

## CHAPTER THREE

# The Religious Affiliations of Y.M.C.A. Constituency

---

This is the first of three short chapters dealing with the religious affiliations of the general Y.M.C.A. constituency, of members of boards of directors, and of secretaries.

Religious affiliation, as here used, refers to the membership or other stated connection of the individual with some officially recognized church denomination at the time the report was made. In general, the term signifies actual membership. At certain points, however, preferences, usually indicating Protestant relationships, were included in the reports and consequently in the exhibits.

Back of these exhibits and the discussion lies an important assumption that will hardly be questioned by the reader, namely, that formal identification with some recognized church body is not only a normal expression of the Christian's desire to consider himself identified with the Christian community, but also an appropriate, if not essential, qualification of the Association's leadership, as it is a logical and worthy objective of its membership.

This does not imply, however, that direct individual evangelism is the only legitimate activity of Associations, or that acts of proselytism directed toward those of non-Protestant belief are normally or perhaps ever the general or permissible goal of their programs. The method of fellowship and of respect that befits honest friendship has not been restricted by Associations to followers of the Protestant tradition.

### *An Early Study*

It has not been the general practice, under the existing annual reporting arrangements, to secure information as to the religious affiliation of Y.M.C.A. members and other constituents.

Such a study was attempted in 1932, however, when the following facts were provided by 709 reporting Associations.

RELIGIOUS COMPOSITION OF Y.M.C.A. CONSTITUENCY IN 1932  
(FOR 709 ASSOCIATIONS)

	NUMBER OF MEMBERS	PER CENT
Protestant .....	530,251	61.3
Catholic .....	143,115	16.6
Jewish .....	31,903	3.7
Other and Unknown .....	159,231	18.4
Total .....	864,500	100.0

This effort was accompanied by numerous difficulties, however, since no detailed guiding instructions were given, and many Associations were unable to supply the information. Nevertheless, the resulting proportions were considered indicative of the general situation at that time.

This 1932 report showed variations of not more than 5 per cent between population groupings, Protestant constituents being slightly fewer, and Catholic constituents slightly more, in cities 500,000 and over. The Jewish constituents were a relatively small proportion in all population groups, and varied little among them. Regionally, however, greater variation was shown, the Eastern region showing substantially more Catholics and fewer Protestants than the Southern or Western, for example, as shown in the accompanying Table. (See page 18.)

### *The First Constituency Study*

In 1942-1943 occurred the first of two major studies of Y.M.C.A. constituency. In connection with these, among other items, detailed information as to religious affiliation was secured for every tenth person whose name appeared on the membership registers of 61 participating Associations. These Associations were included as a result of a careful nationwide

RELIGIOUS COMPOSITION OF CONSTITUENCY Y.M.C.A.'S BY  
POPULATION AND REGION

(PERCENTAGES FOR 709 ASSOCIATIONS IN 1932)

BY POPULATION	PROTESTANT	ROMAN CATHOLIC	JEWISH	OTHER AND UNKNOWN	TOTAL
500,000 and over .....	59.6	19.5	3.7	15.5	(23.5)
100,000 to 500,000 .....	61.0	16.3	5.4	19.2	(29.8)
50,000 to 100,000 .....	59.2	17.3	4.1	19.4	(12.1)
Under 50,000 .....	63.5	14.5	2.6	19.4	(34.6)
Total .....	61.3	16.6	3.7	18.4	100.0
BY REGION					
Eastern .....	57.7	23.4	4.6	14.3	(45.3)
Southern .....	73.9	5.6	3.0	17.5	( 8.1)
Central .....	61.7	13.4	3.2	21.7	(29.0)
Western .....	69.3	8.8	3.3	18.6	( 7.8)
Pacific .....	60.5	9.7	1.8	28.0	( 9.8)
Total .....	61.3	16.6	3.7	18.4	100.0

sampling procedure\* and, for the purpose of the present study, may be considered broadly representative, though those in charge of that study concluded that the results were probably somewhat weighted in favor of the larger cities and the Eastern region. The returns from this study were as follows:

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION OF CONSTITUENTS IN 61 Y.M.C.A.'S IN 1942

	NUMBER OF CONSTITUENTS**	PER CENT
Protestant: Members .....	5,037	45.3
Adherents .....	2,239	20.1
	(7,276)	(65.4)
Catholic .....	2,735	24.6
Jewish .....	555	4.9
Other and Unknown .....	562	5.1
Total .....	11,128	100.0

In this 1942 study, the evidence showed:

1. That among the individual Associations, there was a wide range in the percentage of the various religious affiliations re-

\* *A Study of Y.M.C.A. Constituency After One Hundred Years.* Charles E. Lee and Committee. Bureau of Records, Studies and Trends, 1942, pp. 39-42.

\*\* Based on a sampling of every tenth name on local registers.

ported from local communities, Protestant percentages running as low as 29.7, 34.0, and 39.4 respectively in three New England Associations, and less than 60 per cent in eleven of the 24 Eastern Associations reporting; while Catholic percentages ran as high as 64.9, 53.2 and 43.2 in these three Associations, and more than 35 per cent in twelve of the twenty-four Eastern Associations.

2. That in cities over 500,000, Protestant constituents were from 18 to 20 per cent fewer than in other population groupings; and that both Catholic and Jewish constituents were correspondingly greater by 12 and 6 per cent respectively.

3. That the Eastern region, with 53.5 per cent of the constituents reported as Protestant, had from 22 to 35 per cent fewer than the Western with 75.3 per cent, the Central with 78.0 per cent, and the Southern with 88.6 per cent. Percentages for both Catholic and Jewish constituents in the Eastern region were more than double those of any other region.

4. That the percentage of Catholic constituents aged 18 to 30 (ranging from 31.2 to 36.8 per cent) was substantially higher than for those under 18 (ranging from 21.2 to 25.3 per cent), or those over 30 (ranging from 15.3 to 22.7 per cent). Similarly, that Jewish constituents 18 to 30 (ranging 3.6 to 8.4 per cent) were more numerous than those younger, while those over 30 (ranging from 6.5 to 10.6 per cent) maintained or increased the percentage. The percentage of Protestant constituents aged 18 to 30 (ranging from 51.9 to 87.4 per cent) was correspondingly lower, but increased substantially among those 30 years of age and over (range: 61.9 to 74.9 per cent).

5. That in relation to occupational status, the highest percentages found were among Protestant constituents as follows: managers, 82.6; professional men, 78.1; proprietors, 72.4. Among Catholic constituents, the highest percentages were laborers, 62.5; operatives, 39.0; service workers, 36.9; and craftsmen, 33.0. Among Jewish constituents the highest were proprietors, 9.5; clerical and sales workers, 8.0; and professional, 7.8.

6. That the duration of the membership connection of both Catholic and Jewish constituents was notably briefer than for Protestant constituents (percentages holding membership for

one year or less: Catholic, 59.3; Jewish, 56.2; Protestant, 42.2). Among those with membership duration of from 5 to 9 years, the Jewish percentage (12.6) exceeded the Protestant (10.3). After 10 years, however, the Protestant percentage (11.4) exceeded the former (9.1).

### *The Second Constituency Study*

The second formal study of Y.M.C.A. constituency, used procedures in sampling and treatment of data\* similar to those of 1942, and revealed the following:

#### RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION OF CONSTITUENTS OF 64 ASSOCIATIONS IN 1947

	NUMBER OF CONSTITUENTS**	PER CENT
Protestant: Members .....	6,093	51.5
Adherents .....	1,087	9.2
Total.....	(7,180)	(60.7)
Catholic .....	3,346	28.3
Jewish .....	678	5.7
Other and Unknown .....	634	5.3
Total .....	11,838	100.0

For 30 identical Associations that participated in both the 1942 and the 1947 studies, the following affiliations were reported:

#### RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION IN THIRTY IDENTICAL ASSOCIATIONS PARTICIPATING IN THE CONSTITUENCY STUDIES OF 1942 AND 1947

	1942 STUDY PER CENT	1947 STUDY PER CENT
Protestant: Members .....	41.6	51.9
Adherents .....	19.8	10.8
Total.....	(61.4)	(62.7)
Catholic .....	27.5	28.0
Jewish .....	6.3	5.9
Other and Unknown .....	4.8	3.4
Total .....	100.0	100.0

\* *Second Constituency Study*. Charles E. Lee and Committee. Bureau of Records, Studies and Trends, 1947.

\*\*Based on a sampling of every tenth name on local registers.

Taken together, despite some variations, these exhibits appear to present a reasonably consistent and instructive picture:

COMBINED ANALYSES OF RELIGIOUS COMPOSITION IN Y.M.C.A.'S  
FROM VARIOUS STUDIES 1932 TO 1947

	<sup>709</sup> Y.M.C.A.'s In 1932	<sup>61</sup> Y.M.C.A.'s In 1942	<sup>64</sup> Y.M.C.A.'s In 1947	<sup>30</sup> Y.M.C.A.'s (Identical) In 1942	<sup>30</sup> Y.M.C.A.'s (Identical) In 1947
	PER CENT	PER CENT	PER CENT	PER CENT	PER CENT
Protestant:					
Members .....		45.3	51.5	41.6	51.9
Adherents .....		20.1	9.2	19.8	10.8
Total .....	(61.3)	(65.4)	(60.7)	(61.4)	(62.7)
Catholic .....	16.6	24.6	28.3	27.5	28.0
Jewish .....	3.7	4.9	5.7	6.3	5.9
Other and Unknown .....	18.4	5.1	5.3	4.8	3.4
Total .....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

### Observations

From the foregoing exhibits, it may be observed that:

1. The proportions among the various broad religious affiliation groupings remain fairly constant in the exhibits presented, with some evidence latterly of increased proportions of non-Protestant affiliates.

2. It follows that the strength of appeal of the Y.M.C.A. to persons of non-Protestant backgrounds, as expressed in terms of membership and program participation, appears to have been fairly consistent, recognizing the tendency toward increase in this proportion in recent years.

3. The extent of non-Protestant affiliation appears to have varied to a significant extent not only in relation to region and city population, but also in respect of age and occupation of constituents, and duration of formal connection.

4. The variation in proportions of these religious affiliation groupings between communities is very great, and the possibility exists that it may exist to such extent as to raise the question whether the local Associations so composed have substantial as against formal similarity.

5. The circle of membership or participation is obviously

very broad, and perhaps becoming broader, as regards religious background, so that the clue to the significance of the affiliation may rather be found in the specific activity concerns of small groups of individuals than in broader religious outlook or objectives assumed to be held by or characteristic of the whole.

---

### *FIRST DIAGNOSIS*

Obviously, the Association has adjusted itself over a long period of time to serving large numbers of constituents of other than Protestant religious affiliation. On various occasions it has sought to justify this practice on the basis of a concern for and mission to those not Christian in the hope of securing Christian commitments. Yet it has extended these contacts on a level of interests and services among both Protestant and non-Protestant youth in terms that neither required nor implied any selective religious commitment. While the Association has continued to recognize and esteem Christian purpose as an ideal, with varying degrees of interest and activity in its use, it has at the same time tolerated if not encouraged local variations in both statement and use of formally-espoused organization purposes (See page 30). It has also encouraged broad latitude of religious ties and activity among members and even, as will appear in the next section, in regard to the selection of its official leadership.

Thus it appears that the Associations composing the Y.M.C.A. Movement have quite generally followed policies of composition and program service that seem, at the present time, to leave them largely unready, unable, or unwilling to make the effort to reconstitute religious purpose as a major element in constituency selection and, to that extent, in the fundamental assumptions of Y.M.C.A. policy. This does not necessarily mean that such awareness and acceptance are not recognized and realized in some measure or that, among certain Association groupings, it may not play a genuinely important part,



This first diagnostic statement, necessarily tentative, invites discussion and comment, and perhaps rejoinder. It is subject to modification, as further facts are reviewed, in accordance with the general plan of the report.

## CHAPTER FOUR

# The Religious Affiliations of Y.M.C.A. Board Members

---

The broadening of the base of religious affiliation among the Y.M.C.A.'s constituency, just described, created little concern, even among those most aware of the Y.M.C.A.'s Protestant origin. These and many others held the course justified on the ground that the character and future of the Movement were secure because control remained in the hands of Protestant evangelical churchmen. But the latitude successively granted in this respect by the International Convention in 1922 and the National Council in 1933, and other tendencies of which these actions were but an evidence, favored a considerable broadening of such controls. (See page 30.) Where does the matter stand now?

### *Who Are the Board Members?*

The facts in evidence are mainly those from an unpublished national survey of local boards conducted in 1940, checked for adjustments since that time in the manner indicated.\* In the original study, 709 Associations supplied data on religious affiliation for 8,610 members of local boards.

---

\* Original reporters from 102 Associations participating in one or both of the Constituency Studies of 1942 and 1947 were asked to verify the religious affiliations of board members reported in 1940 and indicate any changes. Replies from these Associations indicated a generally similar distribution at the present time, the non-Protestant board members increasing from 4.9 per cent in 1940 to 5.5 per cent in 1948. It is therefore believed that the distributions from the 1940 study here presented may be regarded as currently reliable.

The accompanying display shows the distribution of these board members, according to ranking by principal religious groupings.

## RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS OF Y.M.C.A. BOARD MEMBERS IN 1940

	TOTAL REPORTED	PER CENT
Presbyterian .....	2,072	24.1
Methodist .....	1,899	22.1
Congregational .....	1,017	11.8
Episcopal .....	858	10.0
Baptist .....	862	10.0
Lutheran .....	436	5.1
Reformed .....	175	2.0
Catholic .....	261 ~	3.0 ~
Jewish .....	90 ~	1.0 ~
All Other .....	940 ~	10.9
Total .....	8,610	100.0

As everywhere understood, the overwhelmingly Protestant character of Y.M.C.A. board member's religious affiliation is quickly apparent. Grouped in the final category are numerous familiar Protestant denominations, and some less familiar with small numbers on Y.M.C.A. boards. Also there included are those not specified. Of special interest are the 261 Catholic and 90 Jewish members of the reporting boards, representing a combined proportion of but 4.0% of the whole.

In the following display it is possible to observe variations among the various regions, and different population groupings. The principal pattern repeats itself in almost all relationships except for disproportion in the case of such bodies as Methodists and Baptists in the South, where they are many, or Congregationalists in the same region, where they are few. Some interest may attach to smaller proportions of Methodists, Congregationalists, and Baptists in cities 500,000 and over, a circumstance not readily explained, though an over-proportion of Presbyterians in such cities cannot be unrelated.

Some interest will attach, also, to the rather small variation in the proportion of both Catholic and Jewish board members, whatever the region or population grouping. This relatively even spread and small proportion would lead one to look for

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION OF Y.M.C.A. BOARD MEMBERS  
BY REGION AND POPULATION (PERCENTAGES)

	TOTAL REPORTED	PER CENT	BY REGION				
			EASTERN	CENTRAL	SOUTH- ERN	WEST- SOUTHWEST	PACIF- IC
Presbyterian . . . .	2,072	24.1	24.5	22.8	23.6	24.6	26.3
Methodist . . . . .	1,899	22.1	16.6	24.3	29.2	26.6	23.3
Congregational ..	1,017	11.8	16.2	11.3	.9	6.8	12.1
Episcopal . . . . .	858	10.0	13.3	7.8	9.5	6.9	9.1
Baptist . . . . .	862	10.0	9.1	6.7	26.7	12.7	8.4
Lutheran . . . . .	436	5.1	4.8	8.0	1.3	2.6	2.0
Reformed . . . . .	175	2.0	4.4	1.4	..	..	..
Catholic . . . . .	261	3.0	3.1	3.3	2.6	2.6	2.7
Jewish . . . . .	90	1.0	.6	1.4	1.6	1.7	.2
All Other . . . . .	940	10.9	7.4	13.0	4.6	15.5	15.9
Total . . . . .	8,610	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

	TOTAL REPORTED	PER CENT	BY POPULATION			
			UNDER 50,000	50,000 TO 100,000	100,000 TO 500,000	500,000 AND OVER
Presbyterian . . . . .	2,072	24.1	23.7	24.4	21.5	27.7
Methodist . . . . .	1,899	22.1	23.8	20.9	21.6	18.9
Congregational . . . . .	1,017	11.8	12.0	10.5	14.3	9.4
Episcopal . . . . .	858	10.0	9.7	10.1	9.9	10.5
Baptist . . . . .	862	10.0	10.0	12.1	10.7	7.9
Lutheran . . . . .	436	5.1	4.9	4.9	5.0	5.8
Reformed . . . . .	175	2.0	1.7	3.0	1.7	2.7
Catholic . . . . .	261	3.0	3.5	3.0	2.1	2.9
Jewish . . . . .	90	1.0	1.0	1.3	1.1	.8
All Other . . . . .	940	10.9	9.7	9.8	12.1	13.4
Total . . . . .	8,610	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

some circumstance in explanation that would be likely to apply in almost any kind of community regardless of the number of persons of these faiths who might live there.

Beyond these matters, the broader pattern of religious composition of Y.M.C.A. boards should arouse some interest. Plainly, to a degree not warranted by the fact of availability, an important degree of selection appears to have been active. For example, when shown against the religious composition of the country, according to the 1926 Religious Census,\* the differ-

\* The 1926 Census here used instead of that for 1936 is usually accepted as more reliable notwithstanding its earlier tabulation.

RELIGIOUS COMPOSITION OF Y.M.C.A. BOARDS COMPARED WITH  
1926 RELIGIOUS CENSUS

	Y.M.C.A. BOARD MEMBERS IN 1940	1926 RELIGIOUS CENSUS	Y.M.C.A. BOARD MEMBERS IN 1940 (PROTESTANT)	1926 RELIGIOUS CENSUS* (PROTESTANT)
Presbyterian .....	24.1	4.9	25.1	7.6
Methodist .....	22.1	15.7	23.0	24.3
Congregational .....	11.8	2.1	12.3	3.3
Episcopal .....	10.0	2.6	10.4	4.1
Baptist .....	10.0	18.8	10.4	29.1
Lutheran .....	5.1	6.3	5.3	9.8
Reformed .....	2.0	1.7	2.1	2.6
Catholic .....	3.0	29.9	....	....
Jewish .....	1.0	5.6	....	....
All Other .....	10.9	12.4	11.4	19.2
Total .....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

ences are sometimes startling.

If adjusted to eliminate the Catholic and Jewish factor from both series, some differences are still marked, and require explanation. How is it, for example that the proportion of Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Episcopalians is two or three times higher than in the population, while the reverse is true of the Baptist group? Is an economic factor involved?

**Balanced Composition**

In general, however, Associations have sought for balance of religious affiliation in board composition. The Association in City K whose board of sixteen members comprises eleven Episcopalians and five Congregationalists is much less typical than that of City L where among the nineteen members are found Baptists, Congregationalists, Episcopalians and Unitarians in almost equal numbers, with a lone Methodist. In another board of thirty-four are found eight Baptists, six Episcopalians, twelve Methodists, and seven Presbyterians, this time with a single Congregationalist. Uneven as these compositions are, they represent a broad policy of diversification renewed from time to time by an electoral process that takes account of many

---

\* Adjusted for omission of Catholic and Jewish communicants.

factors, of which denominational background is one, but by no means always the most important, factor.

Such arrangements are in strict contrast with a plan which might attempt to distribute board positions evenly among denominations, perhaps at the expense of other values, or to compose the Associations as *representative* bodies. They are also a far cry from the early days when some Y.M.C.A.'s were organized *within* local churches, a plan that did not long commend itself to young men anxious to avoid strict denominational connections and ready for a wider fellowship with Christian young men from many communions.

To many the election of non-Protestant laymen to the board of a Christian organization may seem strange. Yet here in scores of Associations this has been done. Why?

### **Why Catholics Are Chosen**

Associations were asked this question in the 1940 study of Y.M.C.A. boards referred to above. For each of the 261 Catholic and the 90 Jewish members of Y.M.C.A. boards respondents keyed such of the following as were appropriate.

#### RESPONSE

- A. Represents special Association department, interest or age group.
- B. Brings unusually sound business judgment.
- C. Represents youth's point of view.
- D. Represents strong Protestant church constituency.
- E. Has the confidence of the banks.
- F. Has typical member experience and attitude.
- G. Represents other than Protestant religious constituency.
- H. Close to community fund administration.
- I. Has the confidence of other community (social) agencies.
- J. Brings special insight and judgment to program.
- K. Represents influential political elements.
- L. Understands and can interpret viewpoint of labor.
- M. Enjoys marked community-wide respect and leadership.
- N. Other .....

The results for the Catholic group are shown below (responses being on a multiple basis).

REASONS GIVEN FOR SELECTING CATHOLIC LAYMEN AS MEMBERS  
OF Y.M.C.A. BOARDS OF DIRECTORS BY REGION AND  
POPULATION (IN PERCENTAGES)

	BY REGION					BY POPULATION			
	EASTERN	CENTRAL	SOUTHERN	SOUTHWEST	PACIFIC	UNDER 50,000	50,000 TO 100,000	100,000 TO 500,000	500,000 AND OVER
A	10.2	10.4	8.3	7.1	3.7	6.5	14.2	5.6	13.2
B	3.7	9.0	5.6	16.9	11.1	8.3	3.3	11.1	9.6
C	7.8	3.3	2.8	4.2	3.7	4.4	6.7	5.6	5.3
D	.4	.5	2.8	..	..	.6	.8	..	..
E	2.9	5.2	2.8	7.0	11.1	6.5	.8	6.9	4.4
F	6.5	7.5	2.8	2.8	8.7	5.6	9.2	5.5	7.0
G	25.3	31.1	22.2	25.4	18.5	28.6	20.8	26.4	24.6
H	2.4	4.7	5.6	1.4	2.5	4.4	1.7	1.4	2.6
I	6.9	5.2	8.3	8.5	9.9	6.5	5.8	11.1	7.0
J	5.7	5.7	16.6	4.2	3.7	4.7	10.9	6.9	3.5
K	3.7	3.8	2.8	5.6	8.6	4.1	3.3	2.8	7.9
L	3.7	2.8	8.3	1.4	6.2	4.1	2.5	2.8	4.4
M	14.7	9.9	8.3	14.1	11.1	13.3	11.7	12.5	9.6
N	6.1	.9	2.8	1.4	1.2	2.4	8.3	1.4	.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The reasons for designating Catholics as members of Y.M.C.A. boards are not obscure. In all fields and population groupings their representative or symbolic capacity (Item G) is looked to in terms of the non-Protestant constituency being served or regarded as desiring service. But when this obvious fact has been stated, and allowance made for the marked respect and leadership of many such men (Item M), the display identifies many other salient reasons. These circumstances are quite general, and frequently signify practical considerations that to those responsible for nominations doubtless represent ample justification quite apart from the fact that the primary religious affiliation happens to be Catholic. A similar picture and similar considerations, are involved with the smaller number of Jewish board members. Perhaps these considerations affecting at most fewer than five per cent of the board members in about one-fifth of the Associations, may be construed as a modest venture indeed in interfaith collaboration.

### Observations

From the foregoing, it may be observed that:

1. Y.M.C.A. board members represent a considerable diversity of church affiliations.

2. While the proportion of board members from the different denominations varies somewhat, a tendency toward balance appears, that is, toward having several persons in the board's membership from several different denominations. Despite this general practice, however, some lopsidedness appears in a minority of Associations.

3. Among those who compose Y.M.C.A. boards are some Catholics and Jews, the former comprising about three per cent, and the latter about one per cent, of all board members reported. These are located in only about one-sixth of the Associations, and constituted about five per cent of the board members of these particular Associations. It would appear that the presence of such non-Protestants within the boards of directors of a Christian organization stemming primarily from the Protestant tradition may be accounted for more largely by the ability and standing of such persons in the local community than by any formal representation of the organized non-Protestant religious bodies as such.

4. The appearance among Y.M.C.A. boards of even limited numbers of non-Protestants may be considered as tending, on the whole, to weaken the basis for whatever reliance may have been placed upon board control of Y.M.C.A. policy in the Protestant interest at a time when the Y.M.C.A. constituency itself was coming to include increasing numbers of non-Protestants.

---

## SECOND DIAGNOSIS

1. The widening of the Association constituency by including substantial numbers of non-Protestants, and the opening of membership in Y.M.C.A. boards to such persons in 1922 and especially in 1933,\* are best understood as features of a broader

---

\* In 1922, the International Convention approved the recognition of Associations having not more than 10 per cent of their local board members who were non-evangelical church members, provided a personal statement of faith were signed. In 1933, the National Council left this entire matter to local Associations, without specifying proportions, relying on an annual certification of conformity to qualify an Association in this respect for formal recognition.



pattern of adjustment to powerful forces operating in the local community that were not readily amenable to control by existing instrumentalities of the national Movement. The participation and acceptance of non-Protestant constituents arose from a need and demand for such services that could hardly be denied in any local community accustomed to help in supporting Associations on the basis of services given without discrimination as to faith or creed. The characteristic evangelistic motivation, years before, quite generally had sought contacts with those not avowed (Protestant) Christians to try through fellowship to convert them. This approach had largely given way to less designing contacts and often different motivation. It may not be assumed that the expectation of benefit was absent on the part of those planning the services or those served; or that the actual benefits did not serve in many instances to broaden and enrich individual faith. No one can affirm that it always did so. No one can deny that it may have done so.

2. The admission of Catholics and Jews to Y.M.C.A. boards, by elective process, after judgment and nomination on the basis of proven qualities of character, youth interest, and community esteem, was undoubtedly accepted as a worthy and commensurate strategy for dealing with the kind of contacts and program requirements set by the accepted constituency. These matters seemed to outrank in importance the observance of the strict tradition of Protestantism. The tendency toward stabilization in the spread of such more or less symbolic representation, i.e., in regional and population terms, suggests that at most times the generally accepted Protestant characteristics of the Y.M.C.A. were not too sharply challenged, the somewhat automatic limitation serving to accent rather than question the Protestant character of the organization while emphasizing a spirit of catholicity.

3. The tendency of some Associations to solicit funds from

Catholic business men may have been and probably was a factor leading to inclusion of Catholics on Y.M.C.A. boards, since criticism could easily have been directed toward the inconsistency of asking funds without permitting some part in their administration. As the Community Chest movement came into being, also, these influences undoubtedly became more formalized and influential in some communities.

4. Though the broader composition of both participating constituency, actual membership and elected boards suggested a general "outward" tendency from the standpoint of strict Protestant definition, the experience in and emphasis upon a type of fellowship free from representative religious implications must be seen as a survival of a precious principle of the Protestant spirit. Some early Y.M.C.A.'s had experimented with boards in which all local denominations were represented by an equal number, perhaps but one, maybe two, from each and every church group. Some Associations, by contrast, were formed within the individual churches. All these experiments passed. The former pattern was too mechanical; the latter lacked unity. There emerged, and survives, a free fellowship, generally balanced as between the several denominations, yet formally "representative" of none. It will hardly be denied that such a free fellowship, operating as a devoted board of an Association, was no less Protestant in spirit and in essence if, among the number, there were a few nurtured in other great religious traditions.

## CHAPTER FIVE

# The Religious Affiliations of the Y.M.C.A. Secretaries

---

The long record of service of the American Associations among youth of all Protestant churches, and other communions, has led rather naturally to some diversification of religious affiliation among the secretaries employed by some of these Associations. The appeal that led young men to contemplate professional careers in Y.M.C.A. service was not restricted by the particular family of Protestantism from which they came. Nor was it entirely unlikely that some Catholic young men would be eager to enter such service, at least on a trial basis if not as an occupation, and some did so. Few, if any, of Jewish background did so.

### ***Active Staff in 1948***

A study of religious affiliations of the active staff of Y.M.C.A.'s in the United States was made in January, 1948. The results were as shown on page 34.

For convenience, certain denominational family groups are shown as one. The classifications also represent denominational connections reported at the time secretaries *entered* service and take no account of possible changes of church affiliation when moving to a new community, or otherwise. While some such changes undoubtedly took place, it is not believed they would seriously affect the general picture, since they would tend to cancel each other.

If only those church groups with ten or more secretaries are considered, it will be noted that sixteen different religious

## RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION OF Y.M.C.A. SECRETARIES IN 1948

Methodist .....	1023	Unitarian .....	10
Presbyterian .....	716	Christian Science .....	6
Baptist .....	495	Moravian .....	4
Congregational .....	387	Swedish Mission Covenant ....	4
Episcopal .....	168	Universalist .....	4
Lutheran .....	161	Greek Orthodox .....	4
Christian .....	84	Church of God .....	3
Reformed .....	60	Latter Day Saints .....	2
Evangelical .....	57	Gregorian .....	1
Disciples .....	43	Adventist .....	1
Brethren .....	32	Christadelphian .....	1
Friends .....	29	Nazarene .....	1
Catholic .....	20	Salvation Army .....	1
Church of Christ .....	13	Miscellaneous local	
Mennonite .....	10	Community churches .....	18
		Sub-total .....	3358
		No reported affiliation ..	37
		Grand Total .....	3395

bodies are so listed. If only those bodies with 100 or more are listed, there are only six. It is noted that within two denominations are found a total of 1739 or 51.2 per cent of all secretaries on the active roster at the time of the study. Such unevenness doubtless reflects to some degree the Protestant composition of the particular fields served.

**Protestants—and Others**

Some interest naturally centers in the presence of small numbers of non-Protestant or non-evangelical individuals in the Y.M.C.A.'s active professional employment. How does this come about? Is the number growing? What is official Y.M.C.A. policy on such matters?

To understand the current situation, some background references are necessary. Although religious matters had long held a prominent place in Association thought, including formal assemblies, and religious connections long been a matter of information in personnel blanks and of concern in recruiting, it is believed that until 1929, the National Council or its predecessor, the International Convention, had never taken any formal action stipulating who might, as to religious status, become a Y.M.C.A. secretary. By implication, some earlier International Convention actions vigorously that set forth the

religious training held essential in schools preparing secretaries for Y.M.C.A. service did define, largely in conservative theological terms, the kind of religious worker desired. Much later also, the same body, in establishing the Certification Plan (at first a voluntary project, providing preliminary status to entrants and permanent professional status after successful appraisal) did include evangelical church membership among the qualifications.

### **Look at the Record**

In 1925, the newly organized Personnel Division took serious account of Convention actions in 1922 and 1925 substantially modifying the basis of membership approved for local Associations, by authorizing in relation to active membership a personal statement of purpose and faith for use by Y.M.C.A. applicants who were not members of evangelical churches. The Personnel Division was concerned as to its responsibility in relation to acceptance for listing in the Secretarial Roster of those years, persons of various bodies and sects usually not considered to be Protestant, others who were members of larger liberalized religious bodies often not counted as Protestant, and still others, including Catholics, never so classified. The solution reached by the Division was to combine statements from two different actions of the 1925 International Convention and the National Council (at its second meeting) in a single statement to be sent persons with affiliations like those mentioned, and of no religious affiliation, for acceptance, signature, and return.\*

---

\*

#### **PERSONAL BASIS STATEMENT**

*(Adopted at the Washington International Convention of 1925)*

"I hereby declare my faith in God, and my acceptance of Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. I desire to serve Him and to be His disciple in accordance with the teachings of the New Testament, and to unite with others in the extension of the Kingdom of God." I am in full accord with the following purpose of the Young Men's Christian Associations of the United States and of Canada and commit myself to its service and support:

"To lead young men to faith in God through Jesus Christ; to promote their growth into fullness of Christian character; to lead them into active membership in the church of their choice; and to make the extension of the Kingdom of God throughout the world the governing purpose of their lives."

*Signed* .....

*Date* .....

This practice was followed without question until the National Council in 1929 reviewed the procedure and referred it back to the Personnel Division and the Conference on the Association Profession for further study. In 1929, this question was but one of many considerations brought to the Council dealing with recognition of secretaries and establishing procedures for admission to the Official Roster of Employed Officers. This further study by a committee of the Conference on the Association Profession was reported to the ensuing Council meeting in 1930. In substance, it held the above described procedure justified and asked that the use of the Personal Basis Statement be continued. The Council was not content so to leave the matter, however, asking that matters be kept in suspense pending report of a new committee to be named by the National Board which was charged particularly to examine the bearing of eligibility for employment in this country of persons serving those Association Movements abroad which were members of the Worlds' Alliance Y.M.C.A. Whatever its theoretical significance in relation to the policy of maintaining the strictly Protestant character, this seemingly unnecessary complication was eliminated by the General Board's special committee when it reported to the National Council of 1931. This report not only confirmed the use of the Personal Basis Statement, but proposed a detailed administrative procedure, which the Council authorized, which was intended to "recognize and continue the vital relationship between the Association Movement, and the Protestant Churches of North America." Further, it was determined that those listed as secretaries who had signed the Personal Basis Statement be considered as having *temporary* listing, pending receipt of the favorable (annual) reports. The Council action said, "If at any time the number of men given temporary enlistment reaches two per cent of the total number of Employed Officers, the Personnel Division shall bring the matter again to the attention of the Council and ask for further instructions."

So determined, the procedure and the careful scrutiny of the matter of proportion were scrupulously followed until a relatively recent date when an unanticipated and somewhat curious development completely superseded the issue. Mean-

time, it should be understood that the actual proportion of non-Protestants in secretarial service never came near the two per cent limit stipulated in the 1931 action unless, in the recent war years, those accepted for USO service might have increased the number to the level indicated. In general, persons employed for regular peace-time service who signed this statement, including some Catholics, were usually younger persons such as swimming instructors or other specialists, whose tenures were rather limited.

### *Evangelical versus Christian*

The curious unanticipated development referred to above requires a still further word. Back in 1933, the National Council, after the authorization of the policy by which local Associations themselves would thenceforth be solely responsible for determining the qualifications of voting members and members of boards, the Council heard and approved the substitution of the word "Christian" for the word "Evangelical" in Article II, Section 3, of the Constitution defining the qualifications of those individuals composing the Council itself. This Article has since read as follows:

The National Council shall have power to change from time to time the ratio of voting members composing the electoral districts, provided that the Council shall be composed of not less than 300 nor more than 400 members, all of whom shall be males, sixteen years of age or over, members of a Christian church and members of a Young Men's Christian Association recognized by the National Council.

The action then and since appeared curious. It was proposed by two of the most prominent Y.M.C.A. laymen who, presumably, were more concerned that the American membership basis not give offense to Associations the American Y.M.C.A. was helping to develop abroad (particularly in Eastern Orthodox countries) than in liberalizing further the Protestant ties of the Y.M.C.A. in this country. Moreover, they no doubt reasoned, few Associations would send delegates to the National Council who did not meet traditional qualifications. And, in fact, non-Protestants who were subsequently sent were undoubtedly few, though the way has since been open.

Important here, in particular, is a further curious aftermath of this action. Eleven years later in 1944, and nearly ten years after a more rigid administration of the Official Roster of Employed Officers had been established\* a proposal from the Personnel Services Committee was approved by the National Council of 1944 for the admission of Junior Secretaries as follows:

Those persons employed by an Association to deal with its policy, program or administration who are qualified through health and general educational preparation (college graduation or its equivalent) and are members of Christian churches, or who sign the authorized personal statement of faith and purpose; but who have not satisfied the requirements in professional training and experience to qualify as Secretaries, as defined in Group 4, are to be called Junior Secretaries.

In this action, the intent and the immediate result was to substitute the word "Christian" for "Evangelical"; but the reasoning of the presentation may have been at fault. It rested upon an apparently mistaken belief that the 1933 Council action had stipulated "members of a Christian church," for the definition of members of local Associations, whereas this related only to delegates to the National Council, the sole reference to local Associations membership being in the By-law action making these Associations thenceforth responsible for fixing qualifications of voting members, and members of boards.

The effect of this 1944 action, however inadvertent, was the discontinuance of the use of the Personal Basis Statement with any applicants for professional standing who considered themselves members of *Christian* churches. The statement is still used with members of non-Christian faiths or of no faith. The Personal History Record currently in use in recruiting and personnel work carries the following questions in relation to religious affiliation:

1. Are you a member of a Christian church?
2. Name of Church.
3. Denomination.

---

\* The Classification Plan adopted in 1934 provided for four groupings of employed personnel, groups 3 and 4 of which were "Professional."



### Observations

From the foregoing, it may be observed:

1. That the professional workers in Y.M.C.A. service are diverse in religious affiliation, as among the denominations of Protestantism; though there is high concentration in the Methodist and Presbyterian categories.

2. That members of non-Protestant Christian churches or of non-Christian faiths have been relatively rare among these workers.

3. That, though few in number, non-Protestant Christians, and secretarial applicants of non-Christian or of no formal religious affiliation, have been a subject of concern over many years among the official bodies of the organization; and procedures for controlling their number were authorized and operative during approximately a twenty year period following 1925.

4. That during the past few years such controlling procedures have been largely given up, by the authority of the National Council, chiefly upon the logical ground of making the practice of recognizing the limited number of non-Protestant secretarial applicants conform to the Council's much earlier decision to open delegate membership in the National Council to the non-Protestant Christian.

5. That proportions of such non-Protestant elements in the secretaryship have remained small, probably never over two per cent; that the numbers have shown little growth; that tenures have ordinarily been rather brief.

6. That the Association secretaryship as a whole remains overwhelmingly Protestant, church-loyal, and closely tied in with the life and activity of local churches.

---

### THIRD DIAGNOSIS

Continuing the progressive diagnosis of present Y.M.C.A.-Church relations in the light of the facts and conclusions of the foregoing chapter, the following points deserve attention:

1. *A trend toward inclusiveness* may be noted from the facts provided in this and preceding chapters regarding the membership, the lay and the professional leadership of the Young Men's Christian Associations. This trend probably

represented less the result of a conscious quest, and still less a development in line with some carefully thought-through strategic concept or plan, than it did an acceptance of existing circumstances, and the attempt to establish some official legal basis upon which to absorb variations in plan and practice within an authorized framework. There has been no evidence, and appears today to be no evidence, that the Association Movement in this country seeks deliberately to leave behind its long-standing Protestant character in order to become basically an interconfessional or interreligious movement.

2. *With each "outward" or liberalizing development, the Association sought at the same time some protective steps or provisions by which to retain or maintain its essentially Protestant character and control.* In the case of membership, it attempted so to limit voting and office holding, but many Associations failed to apply the former provision to their often rather anemic electoral procedures, and some accepted officers with non-Protestant affiliations. In the case of board membership, the attempt to admit but limit the non-Protestant members to one in ten, and to require of these a signed statement of personal Christian faith, broke down utterly. As a result, an officially designated committee of the National Council, after a detailed study of local practice, prepared as the only alternative to any further attempt at national control the resolution following:

Each local Association shall determine the qualifications of its voting members, and of the members of its Boards of Control, providing such members be in accord with the purposes, ideals, and spirit of the Young Men's Christian Association, as stated in the Constitution of the National Council, Article I, Section I, paragraph 3.

In the case of the secretaryship, with the official admission of very limited numbers of non-Protestants, as indicated in this chapter, and the earlier decision to set a watch or control lest

the proportion some time become too great, it has been pointed out that official steps finally taken to substitute the word "Christian" for "Evangelical" in fact led to the abandonment of any pretense of control.

3. And yet, it must be remembered, *the trend toward inclusiveness*, not so much designed as after-the-fact and inadvertent so far as official action at the national level was concerned, *has not necessarily seemed to mean, at least as yet, a basic change in the essentially Protestant character of the organization*. Protestant members are not only more numerous but survive longer and are more likely to be elevated to leadership. Non-Protestant board members useful to represent special points of view, and symbolic, have not become very numerous. Non-Protestants in Y.M.C.A. professional service are neither numerous, nor long in service. Can one say that these facts establish beyond peradventure that the Protestant character of the Y.M.C.A. has not changed, at least to some degree? In the writer's opinion, the facts cited are indicative rather than conclusive. The answer must await further evidence.

4. *The lay character of the Young Men's Christian Association must not be forgotten* in these considerations. Were there values here involved that laymen were less likely to regard as significant, values that required theological experience and perspective? Possibly so. Yet it is recalled that many local boards had members who were clergymen, and some Protestant clergymen were close enough to probably all but a very few Associations to be aware of any pronounced development about which they might have question. Channels of communication on such matters, either direct or through prominent laymen, almost invariably provided opportunity for any warning felt to be needed. Yet it is not improbable that many, if not most laymen, were, as they presently are, far more interested in expanding worthwhile services among the youth of the local

community than they are about theological differences, or about the larger affairs of policy of a complex organization like the Y.M.C.A. in terms of which local decisions and programs take on an aggregate significance not evident in the immediate instance.

5. *The problem here examined covers a period during which the relationship of the local Association to the whole Movement underwent significant changes.* Broadly speaking, the loosening of older controls, which had long been under way, and the attempt to find new ones, have occupied the period since 1922 or 1925. Most of the facts cited in the foregoing and present chapters bear significantly upon these years. In them, most notably, the creation of the National Council, with its scheme of delegate representation by local Associations, enhanced the importance of the local Association in the control of Movement-wide policy. Not only did the old International Convention cease to meet, except at rare intervals, but the authority it was once assumed to have, had no effective counterpart in later years in the field of the present discussion. Local practice and local trends repeatedly became the precursor of what was agreed upon, legislatively, as Movement policy.

6. *The Association's international relationships played an influential though subtle, part in the story of liberalization of Y.M.C.A. thought and practice as regards religious policy.* It has been pointed out that when in 1930 and 1931 the National Council recognized and set control procedures upon the admission of non-Protestants to professional standing, a former leader of the World Service Program urged influentially a policy broad enough to cover those so employed by any other national Y.M.C.A. Alliance affiliated with the World's Alliance of Y.M.C.A.'s. Though his proposal was finally laid aside, it served to remind Y.M.C.A. leaders in this country that

the realities of a world Movement implied an outlook if not specific administrative policies in this country broader than the tradition, broader, even, than Protestantism. Similarly, in 1933, the same general case was stated by one of the most influential laymen in moving the substitution of the word "Christian" for "Evangelical"; and the National Council, in adopting the new term, no doubt believed it was doing something worthy, seen from the standpoint of a world fellowship of Christians of which Protestants would be a part, but only a part.

Far wider in import were these actions than the terms in which they were taken. Few, if any, secretaries from Orthodox countries would be found seeking employment, except on an exchange basis for study, in American Associations.

It would seem unnecessary, if not unwise, to suggest or seriously propose that the scheme of organization and objectives in any country where the Y.M.C.A. had taken root, should be broadened beyond local needs or realities to cover the circumstances of Y.M.C.A. Movements in all other countries as well, i.e., in Scandinavian countries where Lutheranism abounds, in Eastern Orthodox countries, in many other countries where the Roman Catholic faith is strong, as well as in the lands of the Association's birth and largest development, all largely Protestant.

And yet, this panoramic proposal held within it a fundamental issue: How far was it important that the Young Men's Christian Association, in the United States and Canada and on around the world, stand as a strictly Protestant Movement? How far could it do so and remain Christian?

## CHAPTER SIX

# Local Y.M.C.A.-Church Activities and Relationships

---

In this chapter, we shall continue the diagnosis of present day Y.M.C.A.-Church relations by allowing evidence from working relationships between individual Associations and churches in the local community to come into central view. We shall reserve for the next chapter much interesting information about Y.M.C.A. relations with organized *interchurch* life as represented by councils and federations of churches. In later chapters, several important background factors in the life of the local and national community will be brought into relationship.

When, in a given city of several hundred thousand, the Church Athletic Association is "sponsored" by the Y.M.C.A., what significance does it really have for Y.M.C.A.-Church relations? In this city, 177 churches were in this league. Last year 3900 individuals participated in the league, with 283 teams competing in the basketball tournament, and 164 in the diamond ball league. The basketball season opened some weeks earlier this winter because of the larger number of churches wanting to participate.

What significance has it for Y.M.C.A.-Church relations, when in a town of under 15,000, where the Y.M.C.A. maintains its office, holds board, council and committee meetings, and conducts a counseling center in two rooms 15 by 15 feet each, the Association rents a large street-floor room and an equal-sized basement room of the community house of a well-equipped church four nights a week during the school year for larger

events? In this bustling small Association, where the Association also uses the two school gyms several nights each week from October to March, and also holds many committee meetings in homes, the secretary modestly says, "As our group work expands, we will be faced with need of places as we now have them filled. The board definitely views the need of a big gymnasium of our own and a swimming pool. There is no swimming pool in the town. We also need club rooms. When and if the building is erected, it will be for boys and girls, men and women. That is the only sensible thing in a small community."

Now it is not the purpose of this chapter to accumulate or to summarize statistically or otherwise the great number of instances of cooperation between local Associations and local churches. There are thousands of them. Two detailed reports of this type were published some years ago. \* This picture would probably not be much different today. Another report of the same general type, though in a different field, carries, in an interesting and illuminating discussion of religious work, a total of 92 different instances or citations of Associations and activities regarded as indicative of their most conscientious efforts to secure Christian emphasis in their programs. In 43 of the 92 examples, local churches were explicitly or implicitly referred to. This is evidence of a close working relationship.

We turn deliberately, then, from the assembly of similar lists, which could be done without much difficulty in almost any community, to report on another approach. It was more or less a laboratory approach.

One of the committees responsible for the present report began a series of discussions about 1944, from which resulted what was called

AN AGENDA FOR DISCUSSION OF THE IMPROVEMENT AND  
ENRICHMENT OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE YOUNG  
MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION AND THE  
PROTESTANT CHURCHES OF \_\_\_\_\_.

---

\* David G. Latshaw and F. H. T. Ritchie. *A Study of the Relations between the Churches and the Young Men's Christian Associations in the Small Cities* 1927, 40 Pages Offset.

Percy Williams, Chairman. *Report of Study of Church Relations* 1934, 36 Pages Mimeographed.

This document was intended for experimental use by local groups interested to study local Y.M.C.A.-Church relationships. Forty Associations received copies of this Agenda for such use. A total of 676 copies was mailed. Ten Associations reported their discussions in some detail. About 125 different persons, clergymen, laymen of both churches and Associations, and secretaries, share in these ten consultations. Objectives, persons, methods, finance, and related aspects of Y.M.C.A.-Church relationships were considered. It is the task of this chapter to suggest the substance and direction of these consultations. Though carried forward in war years, they afford some of the most revealing clues to local attitudes and possibilities.

As to location, these ten "laboratory" cities spanned the country from east to west. As to population they ranged from 35,000 to over 500,000. They selected themselves by readiness to report their discussions, and are not offered as a technically balanced sample. But it would be difficult to suggest or show that, in respect of the general subject of this report, these Associations or communities exhibited any particularly common characteristic or bias.

### CONCERNING OBJECTIVES

It is difficult to summarize satisfactorily the discussions of ten widely separated groups on a subject of such fundamental nature, though these were reported in some detail. The discussion of objectives centered in an effort to identify the *common* and *distinctive* aims of the Associations and churches in these communities. This was not an easy task anywhere, since it is far simpler to quote a general article or credal statement than to be specific about the immediate aims of a given time in a particular Association or parish.

### ***Common Aims of Churches and Associations***

In this manner, and under these difficulties, the following were proposed and agreed upon, for the present report, the order not being exact, yet following generally the sequence of listings and discussion:

1. To seek Christian commitment and faith—loyalty to Jesus Christ.



2. To develop Christian personality and build wholesome persons.
3. To develop Christian character and emphasize personal devotional life.
4. To provide Christian education and fellowship.
5. To work for Christian citizenship and community betterment.
6. To build a Christian community (and society)—social, economic, moral, spiritual.

To the question as to whether the aims of Associations and churches were identical, similar, distinctive, highly differentiated, competitive, or opposed, most discussions found it difficult to reply in these categories. Though one report said these aims were "parallel," and others preferred the terms "supplemental" or "subsidiary," there would probably have been little dissent anywhere to the view that "basic church and Y.M.C.A. aims are common; methods often differ." To none of those conferring, it appears, were the aims seen to be opposed and to but a few individuals, competitive.

It was said that both Church and Association regard the "membership" relation as fundamental; that both "try to help men to come to terms with life, with God and man;" that both seek to provide worthy "opportunities for the expression of one's convictions;" and that both emphasize the Christian duty of outreach, through "missionary and world service" programs.

Here then is a brief, over-simplified, but significant summation of the views of church and Association leaders of ten communities regarding aims held in common. It is a good foundation, one upon which it ought to be possible to construct a significant measure of co-operation, and because of which it should be difficult even to envisage divergencies so great as seriously to imperil co-operation.

### ***Distinctive Aims of Associations***

When the discussions turned to the *distinctive* aims of Associations not shared, in the main, with the churches of these ten communities, the difficulty was encountered, and not wholly surmounted, of distinguishing between services or functions and true objectives on each side. Despite this problem, the re-

sulting list as a whole is revealing and instructive. The order of presentation here is arbitrary.

1. It was said in one group that the Association "lays particular emphasis upon *practice* as an expression of faith." In a comment that church work has two phases, evangelism and conservation, it was thought by another group that the Y.M.C.A. "emphasizes this latter point." A minister thought that the "four-fold purpose" of the Y.M.C.A. "has religious connotation but is not necessarily Christian." If, to some, the work of the Y.M.C.A. was considered "supplementary," one minister held that the Y.M.C.A. is in a more advantageous position than the church "to form a community of persons" since it is a "neutral spiritual institution," i.e., without denominational characteristics.
2. The facilities and many specialized programs and services of the Association were generally regarded as distinctive.
3. A "non-sectarian" approach and "interfaith fellowship and relations" were set down as distinctive Y.M.C.A. aims without dissent and with apparent appreciation in two of the most thorough and carefully reported discussions.
4. "The Y.M.C.A. has an inter-relationship with all agencies who work for a better community life," said a minister in a midwest group, adding that "the church co-operates but does not have as intimate a working relationship with other agencies."

It is because of special considerations like the above that the Associations of these and other communities, reinforcing and supplementing the aims held in common with the local churches, secure and maintain the large measure of public confidence they do, a confidence generally shared, we believe, by the churches.

In an Eastern city, the consulting group posed the question, "What can the Y.M.C.A., from the point of view of Christian living, provide for persons, that are not or cannot be provided by the Protestant Church?" In answer, the consultants said the Y.M.C.A.—

Provides hundreds of important contacts the church lacks.

Provides wholesome and diversified outlets for personality development.

Gives training to hundreds of Protestant laymen in serving important human needs, which helps to create and deepen the sense of social responsibility.

Provides Christian social outlets for both church and nonchurch youth.

Bridges acquaintance, fellowship and service between men who are active in different churches.

In a city of 45,000 a striking comment was made to the effect that "the predominating purpose of the Y.M.C.A. is to hold the gains the church has made, by methods unique to its own organization."

### ***Distinctive Aims of the Churches***

One approaches this section humbly, conscious of the great meaning and function of the Christian Church in history, and of the all too imperfect way in which the churches, and particularly the churches of any given community, or agencies of the church however closely related, have fulfilled that function and expectation in their place and time.

Lack of common agreement among the various denominations about their aims or those of the Y.M.C.A. was noted in many discussions. One of the most specific lists of "immediate" aims reported was the following:

To reach out and get people to establish a personal relationship to God.

To conduct a specific spiritual program.

To serve as a channel of grace by which man becomes related to God.

To provide formal religious teaching.

While some who participated in developing this list felt that the Y.M.C.A. did not share in the latter two, the listings in some other cities appeared to correspond closely and to include Y.M.C.A. in the total purview of effort.

The citation identifies a very real difficulty in this field of relationships. It is partly a matter of words, whether spoken or written. It is partly a matter of institutional concepts—long-standing and revered conceptions of function and obligation which take on the characteristics of a vested right or expectation, too important to be divided, too sacred to be shared. A

bishop was heard to comment doubtfully upon learning that in some of the newer Y.M.C.A. buildings, simple though beautifully fitted chapels had been provided. A religious leader of another faith said bluntly that while he wanted members of his congregation to share in the benefits of the Association's social and recreational facilities, he did not want the Y.M.C.A. to assume that it could or should concern itself with religious instruction. A minister in the consulting group of a city of 100,000 asked pointedly, "Why does not the Y.M.C.A. operate weekly Bible classes?," only to be answered by another minister's question: "Is it a function of the 'Y' to duplicate the work of the church?"

And yet, the following list of aims of the churches, given by the minister presiding over the consultations in one of the larger cities, in order of importance as he saw it, would probably not be greatly changed by many:

1. Worship and sacraments, sacred ordinances, etc.
2. Evangelism—winning souls for Christ.
3. Christian education and fellowship.
4. Support the Christian ministry.
5. Pastoral services—weddings, burials, counseling.
6. Missions.
7. Leadership training.
8. Charity and charitable institutions.

This list was not dissented from. Only when, thereafter, the "common aims" of churches and Association were listed, does ambiguity appear. These common aims were:

Christian faith and commitment; Christian education and fellowship; missions and world service; and building a Christian community.

Lack of parallelism in phrasing renders strict comparison difficult. It is evident that many Association leaders would not understand the omission of "counseling" or "leadership training" from the list of common aims. How could co-operation in these or other areas proceed very far until they are first understood and mutually accepted as objects worthy of and requiring the *best* joint effort of each and all?

**Observations**

The building of the Kingdom of God in any community is far more than a mere intellectual exercise; and the clarification of aims of the great Christian communions and of the Association whose constituency is drawn from most of them, is not a mere matter of finding the right word or determining nice distinctions. Yet because of the dimension, urgency and frequently the backwardness of the Christian cause in many communities where the priceless values of the Christian way of life are threatened, it might be hoped that Christian leaders, including laymen, and including all ages, would take the time and do the kind of thinking necessary to define and elevate their common aims.

It is quite apparent that many Associations have need themselves to undertake this process; and that some of them carry in their Constitutions statements of purpose that, as was pointed out by a minister in one instance, are "religious, not Christian." But it was also apparent in these ten "laboratory" consultations that there is an equal and urgent need for the Christian forces to be more conscious of each other, to be more conscious of their essential oneness in fact, to work more ardently as a team, and to work more intelligently and aggressively toward aims clear enough to challenge their almost unlimited resources, and sufficiently shared to polarize their effort.

**CONCERNING PERSONS**

Consultation groups in the ten laboratory cities were asked to limit sharply their discussion of this subject to three main aspects: competition for time, and efforts in Y.M.C.A. programs to promote church membership; conflict in use of laymen, and their encouragement in church responsibility; and leadership training possibilities.

**Competition for Time**

Association members may or may not be members of churches; but certainly many Association members are caught up in Church activities and programs of Church-related organizations. Two questions were asked in the consultations:

To what extent does there appear to be competition for the time of young people, as between the Association's program and that of the churches? Is there any similar conflict observable between the normal home and school interests, and those of the "Y" or the churches?

What evidence is there of a systematic and sustained effort within the Association to bring its own members into Church membership and activity?

On the whole, competition for the time of young people seemed not as evident between Church programs and the Y.M.C.A., as between both of these on the one hand, and the schools and homes on the other. Some slight program competition between the first two was mentioned due mainly to scheduling, but instances were given showing the attempt to avoid such conflicts. Systematic efforts by Associations were reported to relate dormitory residents and others to local churches. Church bulletins were secured and distributed among "Y" members, residents, etc., in various places.

When a secretary admitted that his Association had not emphasized evangelism in recent years, a minister said, "However, three members of our church basketball teams which play at the 'Y' have joined the church." Individual counseling in one Association was seen as closely related to the possibility of helping individuals to enter upon church membership relations.

An item from recent annual reports for the Y.M.C.A. *Year Book* indicates that for 1945, 99 Associations reported 2,897 church affiliations, of which 1,780 were new accessions. For 1946, 90 Associations reported 1,796 affiliations, of which 1,176 were new accessions. For 1947, 119 Associations reported 2,266 affiliations of which 1,375 were new accessions. Many Associations, as active as others in this respect, shrink from presuming to do careful accounting and reporting on this matter, important as they consider it. Those Associations which do report follow, presumably, the guiding instruction which reads:

It is desirable to secure more accurate information on the number of persons led into church affiliation in which the *influence of Association staff, committee members, or club leaders in the course of their Association service was probably an important, if not major, factor*, distinction being made between new accessions and those

transferring church membership from elsewhere by letter. Widespread use of Form H, Interview Memo, should supply a factual basis for this count.

### ***Conflict in Use of Laymen***

The second main aspect was *conflict in the use of laymen, and their encouragement in church responsibility*. From its beginning, the Association has been primarily a movement of Christian laymen. Each local Association is first of all a *lay* society. While the influence of the clergyman has been great, Association policies and programs derive typically from lay experience and the lay approach. Association relationships with the Church are thus a product of lay attitudes. The following inquiries were discussed by the consultation group:

How correct is it to say, in terms of your community, that Association laymen are for the most part active church officials? Are the leading Church laymen in your community active in the Association too?

To what extent are Association laymen conscious of any strain or conflict of interest, as between their Association and Church activities, demands, obligations?

In the agendas of Y.M.C.A. Board meetings for the past year, what items were there bearing directly on Y.M.C.A.-Church relationships, programs, etc.?

Reports from consultations seem to indicate that laymen generally are not conscious of any serious strain or conflict of interest. Y.M.C.A. laymen are very largely church laymen also, though three consultations reported that few church laymen were active in the Association.

In one city, Association laymen were, for the most part, active church officials, but many leading church laymen were not, as a rule, active in the Y.M.C.A. In another city, the Association knew of 108 board and committee members active in the local churches. Some ministers complained that they often did not know whether or not their laymen were also identified with the Y.M.C.A., asking whether there could not be some conference when laymen are appointed. In still another city, it was the opinion that there was no conflict of interest between laymen of the Church and the Y.M.C.A. The report said, "In fact, we

are of the opinion that an interest in both makes for a better service in both and a more harmonious relationship all around."

In another connection, a layman prominent alike in church and Association affairs was asked in a committee meeting on Y.M.C.A.-Church relations whether he had himself experienced conflict or strain because of these demands. His answer "flabbergasted" the company. It was, simply, "I never thought of their having any relation to each other!"

### ***Leadership Training Possibilities***

Both Churches and Associations have urgent need of able leaders. In both of these relationships, volunteers not only maintain heavy responsibility as officials, but increasingly carry responsibility as program and group leaders. In war time, with millions of men in military and related services, the supply of local leaders was necessarily depleted. In many communities an acute crisis arose. While these more recent aspects should be kept in mind, attention should be focused on what the relationship has been over several recent years. These questions were discussed:

Can ways be suggested by which the available time of potential Christian leaders might be used to better advantage? A leadership "pool"?

Would a joint approach to the training of group leaders, lay officers and other leaders afford a practical step forward?

Unrealized possibilities in joint leadership training appear to exist. Such attempts were reported in some cities. In one, a leadership "pool" existed. In another, it was thought that the Y.M.C.A. might help train leaders for recreation, craft and club programs in connection with the Fall training program of the Council of Churches.

### ***Observation***

Clearly the churches and the Association will for a long time to come desire to relate many of the same persons to their programs. While there are no doubt instances of direct conflict of schedule and competition for time, as between these two in-



terests, in these laboratory communities, the evidence from the consultations is reassuring in that such conflict not only appears relatively small in volume, but the picture includes numerous indications of give and take, of joint plans, and a clear sense of supplementary or partnership interest on both sides that should point the way for the future.

### CONCERNING METHODS

Some persons feel that present-day Association programs fail to provide adequately for religious activities. This view is expressed more often by older persons than otherwise; and perhaps most often by those who identify religious value with certain specific features such as worship, prayer, Bible study, individual evangelism, etc. Consultation groups were asked to consider these questions:

How far is this view held in your community? By whom? What facts tend to support, or to controvert, this view?

If it be accepted that worship, Bible study and prayer groups are representative religious activities, (a) to what extent are these now provided by the Y.M.C.A.? and (b) if so provided, how effective are they?

What other Association program activities seem to offer the greatest possibility of religious values for those participating? Under what specific conditions is such realization most likely?

Are there some current program activities that do not lend themselves readily to the realization of religious values for participants? Under what circumstances might these be made productive? Should some of these activities be discontinued?

### ***Formal Religious Features***

Many of the consultations noted the passing of familiar older religious observances, i.e., worship, Bible study, prayer groups, but generally realized that merely to add these would not make program religious. Said one minister "The 'Y' serves men rather than God." The following exchange in City F locates the problem well:

One minister thought it feasible to "co-ordinate Y.M.C.A. and church efforts by having some church groups participate in Y.M.C.A. activities such as swimming and gym and, possibly

following that, have a meeting with a devotional and study period." The secretary felt that "you have to be careful that the religious service is not just tacked on to something else and quite subsidiary to it." Such a proposal as this minister made is not uncommon. However, it loses sight of efforts of Associations to give religious content to the whole, and the philosophy behind them. To "add on" specific religious observances to the great range of "Y" activities seems artificial to many. Few activities are there that do not have potential religious value.

In a western city of 80,000 the opinion of the ministers was unanimous that merely adding Bible study, prayer, and worship services to the program of the Y.M.C.A. would not necessarily make it more religious. In fact, question was raised by one of the clergymen as to how much emphasis should be put on Bible study by the Y.M.C.A. with the thought that unless it was done well, it would be better not to do it at all. Opinion seemed to be that the churches did not expect the Y.M.C.A. to conduct Bible Study classes, but rather to provide wholesome recreation and group life under Christian influence. Several of the ministers felt that the emphasis on character building in the Y.M.C.A. was more important as far as contribution to spiritual life was concerned than adding Bible Study classes or prayer.

### *The Place of Associate Members*

From earliest years, an important place was made in the Association for so-called Associate Members. If the Associate Membership should continue, as from the beginning, to be a means of attracting young people with a wide range of interests who may not as yet be much concerned about religious matters, to what extent should Association programs cater to their current interests? Consultation groups considered these questions:

Within what limitations, if at all, will it be justifiable to serve such interests for their own sake?

To what extent may these broader programs be conducted so as to carry "religious" content?

Despite the difficulty of realizing these religious values, no one appeared to question the appropriateness of the Associa-

tion serving this wider range of interests held by associated members who do not as yet share deeper purposes or carry responsibility. The churches also appeared to have a similar problem.

### ***Adjusting Methods to Meet Youth Needs***

Both Church and Association have certain great ideals toward which they are working. Each is obliged to adopt means by which to make its ideals concrete and serviceable to immediate practical needs of young people. Consultation groups were asked to list some of the ways by which the Church and the Association have sought to adjust their methods or approach more adequately to meet the needs of community youth.

Among the suggestions made were some kind of united Christian Youth Program involving leadership training, social life, and common group events, such as a Sunday evening "College of Life," fellowship suppers, sharing of both church and Y.M.C.A. facilities back and forth, and other forms of combined strategy.

In one instance, the consulting group scrutinized, one by one, such Y.M.C.A. services and program features as residence halls, club and camp program, athletic league, and counseling, where it was felt there were significant opportunities to realize Christian values. They concluded that "the area in which there is greatest difficulty is where the greatest amount of commercial duplication appears."

A rich discussion of this question in a city of 80,000 is here reported in some detail:

The view was expressed by one clergyman that the Y.M.C.A. could express its philosophy by more aggressively working at some of the unsolved social problems such as racial tension, poor housing, etc. Another minister suggested that it use its understanding of religious techniques by making such activities as harvest camps true demonstrations of co-operative religious living that would be somewhat similar to the Quaker communities. A minister said that the Y.M.C.A. camp made a helpful contribution to the personality and character development of the boys because its leaders were Christian men and were interested in individuals and human values rather than program activities or tests. The fact that the Y.M.C.A. placed emphasis on the importance of Christian leadership on the

part of its leaders and staff, caused it to have the co-operation and confidence of the churches.

In discussing the ways in which the "Y" could be helpful to the churches, it was pointed out by the ministers that as "Y" leaders work with neighborhood clubs, they would find opportunities to become informed concerning the problems parents of their boys faced and would have opportunity to relate parents to the churches in the neighborhood. It was also felt that periodically club leaders and others should check church participation and attendance of their group members and encourage active participation on the part of their boys in the church of their choice. It was also felt that greater effort should be made to relate more of the members who are not attending church to the church of their choice. Further discussion of method indicated that most of the people who came to the Y.M.C.A. are more interested in participating in the activities rather than in the spiritual phase of the organization, and that there was no desire for Bible study, etc., as was true earlier. Several of the ministers in the group felt, however, that it was the fine atmosphere and spirit of fellowship which attracted people to the Y.M.C.A. rather than to a community center or private athletic club. Church people particularly felt that when they sent their children to the "Y" they would be under the direction of good Christian leadership. It was felt, also, that many people like to come to the "Y" because its activities were on a little higher plane than what they would be if the Y.M.C.A. did not consider itself a Christian organization. It was pointed out further by one of the ministers that frequently a Y.M.C.A. secretary could have greater influence with boys than a minister because of the fact that he meets a boy in situations where the boy is pursuing his normal interests. Frequently in the discussion, the inference was made that the "Y" could be the spearhead through which the churches, in co-operation with the "Y," would pioneer in attacking social and personal problems. The "Y" could do this job more effectively than the church alone because of its facilities and wide community relations. Illustrations of the kind of thing that might be done in this area are:

1. Parent education classes under the best leadership available.
2. A race relations work shop.
3. International relations seminar.
4. Forums.

There were, to be sure, some criticisms of the Associations in these communities: e. g., that the Y.M.C.A. had neglected its

distinctly religious program; that it had drawn young people away from the church, giving them training and experience in leadership, but failed to steer them back into church work; that Y.M.C.A. clubs were not distinctly Christian but more like those of nonreligious organizations; that the Y.M.C.A. lacked an adequate public relations program and was vulnerable because of its large budget and large Community Fund askings in relation to its apparent economic resources; and, finally, that the Y.M.C.A. had lacked leadership on controversial social issues.

### **Observation**

Thus a rich, though complex, pattern of opportunity is seen to lie before the churches and Associations of these and presumably hundreds of other communities. Questions, criticisms, and even misunderstandings may sometimes exist between these two groups of devoted leaders and those closely associated with them. But not necessarily for long, and never at all between the Causes! For, as these reports clearly show, it is *One Cause* and, given a good will on both sides, effective ways forward together will appear.

### **CONCERNING FINANCE**

Under American democracy, the institution of governmental subsidy to the Church is virtually unknown. American Churches have depended upon the interest, devotion, and stewardship of their members to finance their great enterprises at home and abroad. The Association, for the greater part of its history, has drawn a substantial part of its support from the same general sources. However, at a relatively early time, the practical values of Association work were recognized by business leaders who gave increasingly of their resources for the maintenance of Association programs. Increasingly, Association members are themselves a chief financial resource. For all American Associations together, members and participants provide between 75 and 80 per cent of the operating income through membership fees, tuitions, and other service charges. Consulting groups had before them the following questions:

Is there any ground for feeling that the financing of local Association work unduly limits the financial resources of the local churches?

Is there anything in historical or current Y.M.C.A.-Church relationships that makes inappropriate the participation of the Y.M.C.A. in organized Community Chest efforts?

Is the prospect for extension of the simultaneous campaign movement among the churches such as to present the Y.M.C.A. with a practical alternative of (a) identifying itself more closely with this type of financial effort, as over against (b) continuing its identification with Community Chest financing, with its accompanying identification in the public mind with social work, welfare and recreation?

At present, to what extent is Association income derived from practically all classes of the community, or from selected classes only?

To what extent are present tax exemption provisions identical for Churches and Association, and how likely are they so to continue? Wherein, if at all, does the case for continued tax exemption differ as between the Association and the Churches? What bearing would the kind of relationship the Association has with the Church have on the situation that would exist if the long-standing tradition of tax exemption for non-profit agencies should ever be challenged as a form of subsidy by the state?

No marked concern appeared in the reports of the consultations regarding possible competition between Church and Association for local financial support for their programs.

The fundamental values of the Y.M.C.A.'s alignment with the Community Chest were noted, though not seriously questioned. It was observed that the Chest relationship modified significantly the earlier closer relation of Association to Church constituency. This largely involved loss of identity of Y.M.C.A. supporters and contacts among Church people; and perhaps tends to identify the Y.M.C.A. more closely with community agencies.

While in principle it might appear that the Association could look directly to Church people for support, it was recognized that important values existed in the present relationship, and that there appeared to be no likelihood of the simultaneous

finance campaign movement developing in a way to offer a fair alternative, at least for many years.

The Association's contributed income, in view of Chest relationships, was reported as coming from a wide range of givers in most communities, in contrast to what had been true in some pre-Chest situations. No mention appeared of the growing interest of organized labor in Chest policies and control.

Two groups considered that Church and Association tax exemption rests on the same basis implying common concern and action in any threat thereto.

### **Observation**

The contacts of churches and Associations in their communities are legion, and it would appear that the flow of resources from members, participants, and donors must depend, at least in normal times, upon the adequacy of education and mutual accreditation of programs and purposes rather than upon the principle of comity as applied to growing constituency. If these relationships are healthy, it would appear that the connection of the Y.M.C.A. with the Community Chest, which seems increasingly logical and necessary, need not and should not work any disadvantage to Y.M.C.A.-Church relationships so long as Chest controls remain democratic and amenable to church as well as community opinion.

---

### **FOURTH DIAGNOSIS**

To the insights of earlier suggested diagnosis, it is possible now to add additional perspective by reason of the review of what is thought about Y.M.C.A.-Church relationships in ten laboratory communities. The following considerations seem relevant:

1. *The confidence of the local churches in their local Associations stands out*, by and large, in the reporting communities whatever may be the ultimate estimate of the fact that in member relationships, in board composition, and in professional

requirements, the Association generally has over the years moved away from strict Protestant composition and a rigid Protestant alignment. In the reported consultations it did not appear that these tendencies were a matter of any special concern. This may have been due, in part, to the growth of tolerance or the liberal spirit among Protestant leaders who, having accepted the principle of independence in doctrine and exhibiting a less than unanimous position in matters of faith and order, are hardly minded to question too severely the variations of behavior in a loosely affiliated, nonecclesiastical body. In any case, the measure of confidence shown in a series of groups that knew how to be critical, while not complete, is such as to indicate some concurrence in the Association's tactics of adjustment to the exigencies of a Christian youth-serving organization's effort to meet certain needs of present-day youth.

2. *The intricate involvement of the Association in community life, in its effort to serve youth, implies reference to broader sanctions than the Protestant Churches for understanding, goodwill, and support.* The constituency of the Association is becoming almost as wide as the community. The program of the Association has demonstrated values that are understood by the public and desired by the community; and it is altogether likely that neither public nor the community would understand or support any tendency to restrict these services to Protestant-connected youth. Nor does it appear likely that many Protestant churchmen would themselves wish so to limit the benefits now flowing widely for the welfare of youth. It follows that the desire of some churchmen to see the Association declare its identification with organized Protestantism is made more difficult for the Association, if not untenable, by the trend of events. It appears that the circumstances call for a type of social and religious statesmanship



on the part of Association boards and executives that may be relatively rare at the present time.

3. *Acceptance of the Y.M.C.A. and goodwill accorded it in the wider community relationships were regarded, in these consultations, as a sign of strength rather than weakness.* This point had dissenters who imagined how strong an inclusive Protestant "front" (including the Y.M.C.A.) would be if self-contained as to support, and aggressive as to sense of mission. But these views were turned aside as unrealistic, without detriment, one would hope, to the latter consideration.

4. *While treasuring its independence, as a democratic, voluntary association, the Y.M.C.A. as a long-established organization is involved in fundamental decisions relating to the basis of its fellowship, the character of its consensus, and the adequacy of its structure.* These considerations necessarily involve other bodies and groups, require the element of kindred feeling based on common interests, and present the issue and problem of reaching agreement in programs of influential action. In a sense, the widest community relationships imply some of these broader common interests, need for agreement about them, and provision of structures to sustain and fulfill them. Structures and consensus, within Protestantism, have scarcely kept pace with the spirit of liberal fellowship like that exhibited by churchmen in the reported consultations. Even within the Association itself, granting a unifying structure; consensus and real fellowship are found mainly in lesser and smaller groups. It appears that the Association's difficulty today, in respect of its church obligations, is to find a formula that will contain and satisfy all of these legitimate and more or less unavoidable relationships and responsibilities.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

# Y.M.C.A.-Church Council Relationships

---

Here are summarized the returns from 200 Y.M.C.A. executives who responded to inquiries sent out to 221 Associations in communities where both Y.M.C.A.'s and Councils of Churches existed. Communities where there were only ministerial associations or unions were not included. A few Y.M.C.A. cities where a county-wide Church Council but no city Council was at work, were included, as were thirteen counties where both a county-wide Y.M.C.A. and county-wide Council were to be found. The Y.M.C.A. returns, numbering just 200, constituted 90.5 per cent of the potential number.

Before presenting the data it is important to say a few words about the Council or Federation movement in local communities. Ministerial Associations or Unions, of which there are said to be approximately 1400 at this time, are of much earlier origin and everywhere familiar. They were and are fellowships primarily, and perhaps best thought of today as professional groups in which each minister is included because of his mission or occupation. Nevertheless, in hundreds of communities, these professional fellowships actively concern themselves with co-operative undertakings and represent, in substantial measure if not by technical designation, the combined interests of the churches of the community. They may even include Jewish rabbis or other non-Protestant religious leaders. It is commonly found that the executive of the local Y.M.C.A. is a member of this body.

In the Council or Federation of Churches, however, representation takes on a more formal or official character. Its aim is to bring together duly accredited representatives, both laymen and clergy, for co-operative planning and certain program enterprises, as well as fellowship. This movement has grown steadily during the past quarter century. It is now a strong movement, relations with which on the part of an organization like the Young Men's Christian Association, assume increasing importance. As to the organization of the Councils, the following furnishes a clear picture:

The unit in a Council of Churches is usually the local church. Each church elects its own delegates to the central body according to the practice of its denomination. A properly balanced council contains at least one woman from each church. The number of lay delegates is ordinarily determined by the number of members in the church. The delegates elect the officers of the council and decide on the details of organization and program.\*

In early 1948, state and local councils (including county) were reported to be in existence. In addition, there were several other state Sunday School Associations or kindred organizations, and County Councils of Religious Education.

It is with Y.M.C.A. relations to *local* councils that this report is concerned. It will be seen that the 200 returns referred to above represent a substantial proportion of the communities in which both church councils and Y.M.C.A.'s exist. The inquiry dealt with such questions as these:

How generally are Y.M.C.A.'s represented in local Councils of Churches? Is the Y.M.C.A. a member of the Church Council or an affiliated organization? If so, how is this provided for, how are representatives chosen, etc.?

Is the Church Council represented in the Y.M.C.A. Board, as an organization or otherwise? If so, how is this provided for?

What co-operative activities between Associations and Councils, apart from matters of membership and representation, are considered most important by Y.M.C.A. executives? Where is the growing edge of co-operative activity?

---

\* Guild, Roy B., and Sanderson, Ross W., *Community Programs for Co-operating Churches*. Association Press. 1933. 88 pages.

Following consideration of these questions and a presentation of conclusions, certain broader aspects of the Y.M.C.A.-Church Council relationship are examined.

The returns were divided into four main groupings: those *with*, and *without*, full-time Church Council executives, and those in cities with less, or more, than 100,000 population. In twenty-four returns; the reporters indicated that, to their knowledge, *no* Church Council as such was in existence and, where this occurred, no further detail was given on the inquiry questions, though in most of such instances, there was reference to a Ministerial Association or Union neither designated nor organized as a Church Council. This may have been a case of mistaken classification in the master mailing lists used; or the Y.M.C.A. respondent may have been misinformed; or the local status may have been confused, if not too active, or possibly transitional.

The summaries that follow, therefore, deal mainly with returns from 176 communities, including twelve county units. In most of the discussion, the reference is principally to the 158 city communities with Councils of Churches.

### **Y.M.C.A. Representation in Church Councils**

How generally is the Y.M.C.A. represented in Council of Churches?

Is it more often a "*full*" member, or an affiliated organization?

What constitutional or other arrangements provide for this status?

How are representatives chosen?

The evidence from the returns is shown herewith, and indicates that quite generally, according to Y.M.C.A. executives, local Y.M.C.A.'s are members of the Church Councils in their cities. This was true for 85.4 per cent of the reporting cities, while in 14.6 per cent, or one community in seven, the Y.M.C.A. was not a member.

Cities under 100,000 *without* full-time Church Council executives seem to lag slightly behind others in the proportion having Y.M.C.A.'s in Council membership, though in four out

**Y.M.C.A.'S HOLDING MEMBERSHIP IN LOCAL CHURCH COUNCILS  
BY SIZE OF CITY AND TYPE OF EXECUTIVE PROVISION**

WITHOUT FULL-TIME EXECUTIVE:	CITIES REPORT- ING	NO CHURCH COUNCIL	TOTAL WITH COUNCILS	Y.M.C.A. IS A MEMBER	PER CENT	Y.M.C.A. NOT A MEMBER	PER CENT
Cities under 100,000	93	16	77	61	79.2	16	20.8
Cities 100,000 & over	13	2	11	10	90.9	1	9.1
<b>WITH</b>							
FULL-TIME EXECUTIVE:							
Cities under 100,000	21	2	19	17	89.5	2	10.5
Cities 100,000 & over	59	2	57	51	89.5	6	10.5
Sub-Total	186	22	164	139	83.5	25	16.5
Town and Country							
Y.M.C.A.'s	14	2	12	9		3	
Grand Total	200	24	176	148		28	
Per Cent			100.0		84.1		15.9

of five instances the Y.M.C.A. does hold membership. For the Town and Country Y.M.C.A.'s reported, the percentage of membership is somewhat below that for cities.

It is desirable, however, to examine more closely what reporters imply by holding membership in the Church Council. In this respect, there is variation as will be noted from the Table following:

**TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP HELD BY Y.M.C.A.'S IN 148 CHURCH COUNCILS**

WITHOUT FULL- TIME EXECUTIVES:	TOTAL COUNCILS REPORTED	TOTAL WITH Y.M.C.A. HOLDING MEMBERSHIP	TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP:		
			FULL	AFFILIATED	NOT STATED
Under 100,000	77	61	36	18	7
100,000 & Over	11	10	5	3	2
<b>WITH FULL-TIME EXECUTIVES:</b>					
Under 100,000	19	17	15	1	1
100,000 & Over	57	51	28	19	4
	(164)	(139)	(84)	(41)	(14)
Town & Country Y.M.C.A.'s	12	9	5	2	2
Totals	176	148	89	43	16
Per Cent		100.0	60.0	29.1	10.9

Just 60 per cent of the Associations indicated that they had "full" membership in these Councils. However, it is difficult to be certain that all of these reporters distinguished between a constitutionally co-ordinate position, and the "affiliated" relationship by which many Council constitutions provide for inclusion of other Christian agencies in their communities. While doubtless a point that should not be greatly magnified, it was reported from certain communities, however, that this distinction is given a great deal of significance among certain church leaders. More important would seem to be the full sharing of fellowship among all of these Christian leaders in the work at hand. Some light on the above-mentioned distinction may be thrown by the degree of formality governing local Council membership provisions.

TYPE OF PROVISION GOVERNING Y.M.C.A. PARTICIPATION				
	COUNCILS IN WHICH Y.M.C.A.'S ARE MEMBERS	CONSTITU- TIONAL PROVISION	SOME OTHER FORMAL ARRANGEM'T	MATTER OF COURTESY
WITHOUT FULL-TIME EXECUTIVES:				
Under 100,000 .....	61	41	5	15
100,000 & Over .....	10	6	1	3
WITH FULL-TIME EXECUTIVES:				
Under 100,000 .....	17	13	3	1
100,000 & Over .....	51	41	3	7
Town and Country Y.M.C.A.'s	9	6	2	1
Totals .....	148	107	14	27
Per Cent .....	100.0	72.3	9.5	18.2

The basis upon which these Y.M.C.A. "representatives" are chosen to Church Council membership becomes perhaps the crucial aspect of the relationship. To what extent do Y.M.C.A.'s actually designate their representatives? These facts are shown opposite.

Except in the larger cities where there are full-time Council executives, the representatives of Y.M.C.A.'s in the local Councils are in about two out of five instances, Y.M.C.A.-designated. In the largest cities mentioned, this is substantially less frequent. This matter of self-choice can assume greater proportions than it deserves, doubtless, as it may appear when the reverse relationship is under study shortly. At this point, how-

## BASIS UPON WHICH Y.M.C.A. REPRESENTATIVES ARE CHOSEN

Designated by:	WITHOUT FULL- TIME EXECUTIVES		WITH FULL- TIME EXECUTIVES		TOTAL REPORTED
	UNDER 100,000	100,000 & OVER	UNDER 100,000	100,000 UP	
Y.M.C.A. President .....	13	1	2	5	21
Y.M.C.A. Board .....	16	4	7	5	32
General Secretary, custom, etc.	3	..	2	..	5
Y.M.C.A.—other method ....	4	1	..	8	13
Per cent Y.M.C.A.-named ....	(60.0)	(60.0)	(57.9)	(37.5)	(51.8)
Choice as officer .....	6	..	..	13	19
Council designated .....	4	..	2	7	13
Other, uncertain, etc. ....	7	1	1	4	13
Not reported .....	7	3	3	6	19
Total .....	60	10	17	48	135

ever, it should be noted that fairly widespread practice gives to the Y.M.C.A. the opportunity and responsibility of deciding who shall represent it in the deliberations carried on by the Council. It may be pointed out by some that much of the real business of the Council is carried on, as perhaps it should be, in its own executive body. To what extent do Y.M.C.A. representatives participate there?

## Y.M.C.A. PARTICIPATION IN CHURCH COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES

	CURRENTLY A MEMBER	CURRENTLY NOT A MEMBER	NO ANSWER OR "SOMETIMES"
WITHOUT FULL-TIME EXECUTIVE			
Under 100,000 .....	36	26	2
100,000 & Over .....	9	1	..
WITH FULL-TIME EXECUTIVE			
Under 100,000 .....	15	4	..
100,000 & Over .....	37	9	2
Town & Country Y.M.C.A.'s .....	8	..	1
Total .....	109	40	5
Per Cent .....	70.8	26.0	3.2

Closely related to this matter of Council Executive Committee participation is the basis upon which any Y.M.C.A. persons who may be chosen to that committee are named. The basis varies, of course, according to factors emphasized by each local organizing body; and while in one case the scheme of organization may bring forward into membership someone by virtue of

his own representative status, more often this would occur by a freer choice among the Council membership of persons whom they desired to honor in this way, or who had won some special measure of confidence, or according to some notion of rotation, etc. The basis upon which Y.M.C.A. persons presently in Council executive committee, as reported by these persons themselves for the most part, is shown.

BASIS UPON WHICH Y.M.C.A. PERSONNEL WERE CHOSEN  
TO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES OF CHURCH COUNCILS.

Basis	WITHOUT FULL- TIME EXECUTIVES		WITH FULL- TIME EXECUTIVES		TOTAL REPORTED
	UNDER 100,000	100,000 AND OVER	UNDER 100,000	100,000 AND OVER	
By election .....	12	3	3	6	24
By appointment .....	5	..	1	8	14
By constitution, tradition .....	5	2	3	10	20
By Council (unspecified) .....	2	1	3	7	13
Per cent Council named .....	(66.6)	(66.6)	(66.6)	(84.6)	(73.7)
By Y.M.C.A. ....	1	..	3	2	6
Other and uncertain .....	6	2	1	3	12
Not reported .....	5	1	1	1	8
Total .....	36	9	15	37	97*

Reverting to the main questions asked at the beginning of this section, it is clear from the returns that Y.M.C.A.'s participate in Councils of Churches in their communities in four out of five possible opportunities; that, when they do, in three out of five cases, they do so as *members*; and that these arrangements generally have a constitutional basis. It further appears that by and large designations of representatives are in about two cases out of three made by some Y.M.C.A. procedure. In the case of the Executive Committees of the Councils, however, while Y.M.C.A. representatives are members thereof in seven cases out of ten, they become such not by any process of Y.M.C.A. designation, but by elective, constitutional or other processes determined by the Church Councils themselves.

We turn now to examine the other aspect of Y.M.C.A.-Church Council relations, namely, to what extent Council representatives are participants in Y.M.C.A. Boards and, where this is the case, by what procedures they are so designated.

\* Does not include 8 Town and Country and 4 late returns.



**Church Council Representation in Y.M.C.A. Boards**

How generally are Church Council representatives found in Y.M.C.A. Boards of Directors?

How far does this occur by Council designation?

The inquiry sent out sought specific information on this aspect. The following questions were used:

Does the Y.M.C.A. Board have among its regular members one or more representatives of the local Council? If yes, how named?

If serving, but *not* as a regular Board member, describe the basis.

What formal Board action or other formal provision, if any, covers this arrangement?

Is there some local minister, other than a Council representative, on the Y.M.C.A. Board? If so, how named?

With regret, it is recognized that these questions were not understood by many reporters. Apparently they assumed the pattern of the preceding section of the inquiry, where Y.M.C.A. representation on the Council was under examination. Here, however, the *reverse* was involved. Hence the replies of fifty-two reporters cannot be used with confidence. Uncertainties in some other replies, and failure to report, further vitiated the return.

**CHURCH COUNCIL REPRESENTATION ON Y.M.C.A. BOARDS**

	COUNCIL IS REPRESENTED	COUNCIL IS NOT REPRESENTED	RETURNS AMBIGUOUS	NO REPLY	TOTAL
<b>WITHOUT FULL-TIME EXECUTIVES</b>					
Under 100,000 .....	17	29	23	8	77
100,000 & Over .....	5	3	3	..	11
<b>WITH FULL-TIME EXECUTIVES</b>					
Under 100,000 .....	..	12	7	..	19
100,000 & Over .....	5	34	17	1	57
Town & Country Y.M.C.A.'s ....	2	3	2	5	12
Total .....	29	81	52	14	176

So far as the inquiry was understood, the reports indicate that Councils are usually *not* represented upon Y.M.C.A. boards. However, the comments that accompanied these returns showed plainly how far many of those reporting were from grasping the plain implication of this group of questions, namely, directly designated representatives of the Church Council in Y.M.C.A. Board capacities. There were many references to the presence of Council persons within the Board memberships, almost always by regular elective process by which members of the Y.M.C.A. elected them as they did other names in the current slate. Behind these processes, of course, other important influences were probably operating, such as the careful thought of a nominating committee anxious to make certain that the Board include a person like the Council executive by reason of both his inherent and representative contribution. Not infrequently, it should be stated, the response indicated some resistance to including anyone whatsoever on the Y.M.C.A. Board because of his representing some community group.

It must be recognized that the absence of such formal designation does not necessarily mean that there is neither contact nor co-operation at the Board level between the Council and the Y.M.C.A. On the contrary, it is frequently the case, if not likely, that some Y.M.C.A. personnel are in the midst of Council groups and divisions, and vice versa. Often recent Council officers, that is, laymen, are also members of Y.M.C.A. Boards, and sometimes officers. In these returns, there was direct "interlocking" of such leaders in thirteen instances. It may be that the frequently discussed question of official cross-representation is somewhat academic. Probably much more significant is the importance of the tasks about which the collaboration of both Council and Y.M.C.A. leaders is needed. This without doubt exceeds greatly in importance the question as to whether or not ministers other than those who may represent the Church Council are part and parcel, as they not infrequently are, of the Y.M.C.A. Board's membership and constructive work.

### ***Co-operative Activities***

What co-operative activities between Associations and Coun-

CO-OPERATIVE ACTIVITIES OF Y.M.C.A.'S AND CHURCH COUNCILS  
BY POPULATION, EXECUTIVE STATUS, AND IMPORTANCE.\*

TYPES OF ACTIVITY BY FREQUENCY OF FIRST RANKINGS:	WITHOUT FULL-TIME EXECUTIVE			WITH FULL-TIME EXECUTIVE			TOTAL	
	HIGHEST	OTHER	HIGHEST	HIGHEST	OTHER	HIGHEST	ACTIVITIES	OTHER
	UNDER 100,000	100,000 AND OVER		UNDER 100,000	100,000 UP			
Religious series or events	12	17	4	5	3	4	7	12
Youth programs	6	9	1	3	2	4	9	6
Athletic-Recreation	4	8	1	4	4	1	8	9
Weekday Religious Education	7	1	..	..	..	1	2	3
Leadership Training	5	4	1	1	1	2	2	3
Laymen's events, etc.	4	3	..	..	2	..	..	2
Financial events	2	1	1	..	..	1	2	6
Census and Survey	3	..	..	..	..	2	1	3
Preparation for Marriage	2	..	..	..	1	..	..	2
Daily Vacation Bible School	2	2	..	1	..	..	..	1
Public Relations-Radio	1	3	..	..	..	1	..	2
Miscellaneous	2	12	2	10	1	7	14	23
Totals	50	60	10	24	14	23	45	72
							119	179

\* Y.M.C.A. Executives were asked to list co-operative activities in order of importance as they saw them. Most did so. The number of activities or projects listed was somewhat limited in the majority of the returns. Accordingly, the activities are here listed by frequency of first rankings taken together (Righthand column, under "Total.") The columns headed "Other" represent listings after the first (taken together) without reference to frequency order, although the result follows closely the order established by the highest rankings.

cils, apart from matters of membership and representation, are considered most important by Y.M.C.A. Executives?

Where is the "growing edge" of co-operative activity?

The range of co-operative activities reported was considerable, and also difficult to summarize usefully, since each list of co-operative projects requires to be seen in its local setting. Things long-established in one community seem new and untried in another; priorities here reported are only the reflection of one person's judgment; here under review are only those things said to be within the co-operative purview of the Y.M.C.A. and the Church Council, and not necessarily a typical or major part of the work of either. Taken together, however, it must be thought that here is an indication at least of the level upon which co-operation is carried on by two great Christian interests particularly concerned with youth.

The three activities heading the list may be taken as the commonest field of co-operative activity between Y.M.C.A.'s and Church Councils. The religious series or events include the great religious festivals of Easter and Thanksgiving, Lenten occasions, summer joint services, and many others. Youth programs include young people's councils of various names, older boys' and girls', and youth conferences, rally and other meetings. Social and recreational occasions were named almost as often as athletic leagues. Some activities least often mentioned seem among the most strategic or important, such as laymen's joint meetings and retreats, public relation and radio program, community religious census and surveys.

Of interest too were those rarely mentioned, though given first importance in particular localities. The mere listing here will suffice:

Sherwood Eddy visit  
Brotherhood Week  
Veterans' work  
Movie program  
Old Clothes Drive

Food Relief  
Industry visits  
Interracial project  
Juvenile Court  
United Nations

Like these, were projects listed below first place by reporters in these and other communities:

Visitation evangelism	Service men
Campaign against salacious movies	Know Your City
Song festival	Bible reading emphasis
Preaching mission	Church directory, bulletins
Visual Aid committee	Issues facing the Church today
Choral society	Counselling
Hospital visitation	Larger parish
Race track protest	Interfaith, intercultural

Since all of these items were named by local Y.M.C.A. executives reporting on current co-operative projects, as between Y.M.C.A.'s and Church Councils, it must be observed that the list is so varied as to suggest a definite lack of focus, that is to say, little if any apparent agreement upon certain types of projects concerning which the experience and possible competence of the Y.M.C.A. might be drawn upon and as a result of which substantial advances of the Christian program in the community might reasonably be expected. It is only fair to say, however, that not a few Y.M.C.A. executives referred to their identification with the whole range of Church Council expression as a natural and perhaps preferable kind of relationship.

To the question asking reporters to list any other projects upon which co-operation was being planned for 1948, suggestive of the "growing edge" of co-operation, items were reported not unlike those preceding. For comparison the same main topics are here used. The exhibit is offered as the local Y.M.C.A. executive's understanding of the prospect and intentions ahead.

The exhibit shows that the advance plans for 1948 for certain communities are similar to projects already going on elsewhere. They may mean substantial progress, however, for the cities where they are new. So also with the activities still beyond existing practice or 1948 plans for the communities whose Y.M.C.A. executives felt further co-operation to be desirable, as shown in parentheses in the above Table. For these, the miscellaneous projects include two camping proposals, a "key leaders" plan, a social action plan, a race program, and a food project. Yet despite these hopeful variants, it would appear that the

## PROJECTS UPON WHICH Y.M.C.A.-CHURCH COUNCIL CO-OPERATION IS PLANNED FOR 1948

ACTIVITIES WITH CO-OPERATION PLANNED FOR 1948	WITHOUT FULL-TIME EXECUTIVE		WITH FULL-TIME EXECUTIVE		TOTAL REPORTED
	UNDER 100,000	100,000 AND OVER	100,000 UNDER	100,000 UP	
Religious series or events .....	4	..	1	2	7
Youth programs .....	4 (2) *	..	3	1 (1) *	8 (3) *
Athletic-Recreation .....	3 (1)	2	..	2 (1)	7 (2)
Weekday Religious Education .....	1 (1)	..	1	..	2 (1)
Leadership training .....	1 (2)	..	..	1	2 (2)
Laymen's events .....	1	..	..	1 (2)	2 (2)
Financial events .....	..	..	.. (1)	..	.. (1)
Census and survey .....	1	..	..	3	4
Marriage, family .....	2	..	..	1	3
Daily Vacation Bible School .....	1	1	..	..	2
Public relations, etc. ....	..	..	..	..	..
Miscellaneous .....	2 (3)	1	1 (1)	8 (2)	12 (6)
Totals .....	20	4	6	19	49
Co-operation desirable .....	(9)	..	(2)	(6)	(17)

\* Reporting Y.M.C.A. executives were asked to indicate types of project, beyond those already listed as in operation or planned for 1948, upon which they considered co-operation desirable. These are indicated by parentheses in the above Table.

main field of Y.M.C.A.-Church Council collaboration has become somewhat definitely outlined and perhaps likely to remain within the somewhat conventional area until some substantial modification takes place in what is thought urgent or feasible for this type of effort.

### **General Conclusions**

1. The fairly complete return (200 out of 221) from the local executives to whom inquiries were sent, suggests that here is a rather inclusive report from which, so far as the views of one party to the relationship are considered adequate, it should be possible to secure a reasonably accurate picture of *what is*. A parallel study conducted about the same time by Dr. J. Quinter Miller of the Federal Council of Churches yielded results that are broadly in line with these findings.

2. The evidence indicates (1) that quite generally, Y.M.C.A.'s are in direct relationships with local Church Councils (84.1%); (2) that the Associations generally consider their status in the Council to be that of "full membership" (60.0%), with nearly one-third indicating their status to be "affiliate," with some remaining uncertainty as to whether respondents adequately distinguished between these two, and the likelihood being that a part of those specifying full membership referred to acceptance and fellowship aspects rather than precise legal status; (3) that constitutional provisions determine this relationship in nearly three-fourths of the Councils, but with simple "courtesy" provisions obtaining in nearly one city in five; (4) that Y.M.C.A.'s determine who their representatives in the Council shall be in more than half the Councils, and least often in cities of 100,000 or more where full-time Council executives are employed; (5) that Y.M.C.A. officers are included in Executive Committees in 70.8 per cent of the Councils and are often officers or chairmen of important committees; and (6) that Council election, appointment, or other constitutional procedures, rather than Y.M.C.A. designation, determines such membership in three-fourths of the Councils.

3. While there was some evidence that Church Council executives or leaders were to be found in Y.M.C.A. Board mem-

berships, and even some references to joint designation, it would appear that these instances are rather rare. Respondents confused this pattern with the presence of Council personnel in Boards by regular Y.M.C.A. elective processes. Much evidence was at hand to show that community religious leaders were likely to appear in either Y.M.C.A. or Church Council official bodies, or in both; and that it was very difficult to say of a person so chosen in which he was principal, and in which representative. It appeared obvious, however, that substantial contacts were being maintained between Councils and Associations, whatever the designating procedures. Only rarely was the opposite the case.

4. The main patterns of co-operation appear to have been worked out in a fairly consistent manner, up to now. The things that one might expect a newly formed Church Council-Y.M.C.A. combination to attempt may be largely inferred from the displays presented. Many local communities are "innovating" projects of long standing in other communities. Advance plans seem largely a repetition of what has gone before. It could happen that the chief interest would lie, under certain conditions, in who would "control" these well-established enterprises, or who would be known in the community as responsible for them. Surely this is a fairly low level upon which to predicate the co-operation of the Christian forces of any community; and perhaps the issue of Protestant solidarity itself may seem to many to be hardly a sufficient rallying idea. Are co-operative activities to remain within a somewhat conventional area until some substantial modification of outlook takes place? The running list of "miscellaneous" projects provides little novel or startling; more church directories, visits to public institutions, such definite "Y.M.C.A." concerns as new building plans, an American Bible Society event, some references to interracial efforts not described, etc. More suggestive were a Mayor's Committee on Civic Affairs (a Church project?), a consulting committee on Y.M.C.A. functions restudy, and a local conference on Christianity and the Economic Order. Doubtless no measure of co-operation between Councils and Associations can usher in an early local millennium. Yet, worthy of



fuller exploration by all concerned, is some compelling formulation or restatement of the objectives adequate to draw into unity.

5. While Y.M.C.A. participation in Church Council work was shown to be quite general, in the communities covered by the inquiry, it should not be forgotten that these 200 reporting localities are but a small proportion of the communities where Y.M.C.A.'s are to be found, and where another form of Church organization—the variously named ministers' organizations—is probably prevalent.

---

### FIFTH DIAGNOSIS

At this point the cumulative series of diagnostic comments takes on a more specific character required by the facts reviewed in this chapter. The reader will not overlook, however, that the relationship between the Y.M.C.A. and the Church Council of any given community must never ignore the actual tradition, condition and composition of the Association involved as discussed in preceding chapters. With this caution, we turn to the Fifth Diagnosis.

1. *The Fact of Division cannot be disregarded.* The statement that "it has been very difficult to get the ministers of \_\_\_\_\_ to co-operate in any enterprise" (D)\* may have been true reporting by the Y.M.C.A. executive who said it, or it may have represented reactions of a more personal character, or related to the role he thought the Y.M.C.A. should have. However, said this reporter, "The Protestant movement in \_\_\_\_\_ is on the decline." Another said, "Just recently,

---

\* To facilitate the presentation of this and succeeding comments, which must remain anonymous, the classifications of communities observed earlier in this report will be followed here also, using the following key:

A—Communities under 100,000 without full-time Council executives.

B—Communities 100,000 and over, without full-time Council executives.

C—Communities under 100,000, with full-time Council executives.

D—Communities 100,000 and over, with full-time Council executives.

\_\_\_\_\_ has organized a Church Council consisting of all the Protestant churches, with the exception of the Lutheran Church," and adding that "the 'Y' and the Church have co-operated very closely during these many years, and there is a very happy relationship between the two organizations" (A). Apparently these reporters consider that the Y.M.C.A. has within itself a kind of "unity" that these situations do not provide among the churches. Another reporter said, "We have two bodies of Protestant Evangelical people in our town: the Ministerial Association and the Council of Churches. The Ministerial Association has had a long and active life—the Council of Churches has had an intermittent experience. The state office comes in and organizes it; it functions rather mechanically for a year or two and then declines. We are at present on the low side of the cycle" (C). Somewhat similarly, comments another from a smaller city, "In smaller cities the Ministerial Association is the center and real clearing house. The Council is the laymen's section for action. Most Councils smaller cities have in this area are still in their infancy. Few churches will appoint really strong personalities to the Council" (A).

Even when organizational relationships are satisfactory, it sometimes turns out that other considerations lead to substantial division between the member bodies or their representatives. "Our Council of Churches primarily promotes released-time religious education. Much division with the group. Not very successful." (A).

Apparently the issue here has to do with the basis upon which the structure and reality of unity can be achieved; the recognition of existing unities; the place of structural concepts in a field of division and emerging unity; the validity of partial inclusiveness. Other factors must, of course, be taken into account.

2. *The Reality of Group Pressures is evident.* It does not seem surprising, in view of the structural plan of the local

Church Councils by which component churches and organizations generally designate their representatives, for some Council leaders to assume that this principle should also obtain as a formal means of ensuring that Church Council representatives and spokesmen should always be present in Y.M.C.A. Board deliberations. Many if not most Association leaders appear to reject this thesis entirely. Says one: "No group elects or designates an official representative to the Board" (D). And another, "If the Council of Churches should select or designate an official representative, then why not the Roman Catholic Church, Jewish group, and C.I.O., A.F. of L., etc. and etc." (A). This latter executive added significantly, "The question of our being a Protestant movement comes to the fore the more we proceed to become democratic and have committees and boards elected by members, a large share of whom are Roman Catholic or nonchurch. As you secure larger participation and representation from such groups, the more difficult it is to retain membership in a Protestant Church Council" (A).

Whether or not conditions like these are present in the community whose Y.M.C.A. executive writes "The Council has never taken the 'Y' into full confidence" (A), the evidence multiplies that Y.M.C.A.'s increasingly face just such dilemmas in scores if not hundreds of local communities. The way forward is not too clear, in the minds of many. From logical or traditional grounds, it can be argued that the Y.M.C.A. course should be altogether clear, namely, an open, forthright and even aggressive Protestant alignment, structurally and otherwise. But, however satisfying to some points of view, it may not always carry the needed solution. Said one local secretary, "Small Council of Churches—12. We are a minority here" (A).

3. *The Nature of Co-operative Projects sometimes lacks challenge.* Why did the general secretary of the Association in a major city say, "The Y.M.C.A. and the Council have not

co-operated specifically on any projects in 1947. I believe if you could see the enterprises upon which the Council works and the 'Y' works, that you would understand the reasons therefor" (D).

Why did another similarly placed city-wide executive comment in this manner—"We see a problem arising in the Council of Churches, i.e. a tendency more and more to do exactly the things the Y.M.C.A. is set up to do—youth work on the same level and much the same way instead of saying to the Y.M.C.A., 'Here is something which ought to be done, or done better, or in a more adequate way.' We are a youth organization and should be able to count on their co-operation." (D).

More strident still is the "complaint" of an exceptionally mild executive in a smaller community who says, "The Council in \_\_\_\_\_ is poorly organized, dominated by the clergy, with Monday morning meetings. I believe they have a committee studying the possibility of forming a Ministerial Association. The Council now *is* a "ministerial association" to all intents and purposes. Continual bickering between ministers, although on the surface all seems well. . . . No projects of major importance! Clergy hold all offices!" (A).

Now obviously, these comments may not be typical of the usual best thinking of these particular respondents, or of what others might happen to say. On the other hand, while such attitudes are to be found, it is clear that they serve as barriers to co-operation and fuller understanding. The review of co-operative projects, existing or planned, or even desired by those who so indicated, does not suggest that invariably the Y.M.C.A. executive attitude or the Y.M.C.A.'s own local performance should be taken as the norm of what is desirable, or needed, or attainable. More likely is it that through lack of sufficient contact and common planning, the traditional and feasible stand in the way of what might be. Needed is the ability and readiness, nowhere presumed to be limited to Y.M.C.A. leadership, to de-

fine and activate worthy undertakings of the combined Christian resources of the community. It may not be too far out of the immediate context, moreover, to suggest that some of these enterprises may well transcend the strict limits of Protestant co-operation.

4. *The Will to Unity is not always present.* It is a philosopher's question whether genuine unity can ever come just by "willing." Perhaps the "will to will" is itself the product of other factors and dispositions lying deep within the experience and personality of individual leaders. Somewhat in this manner, doubtless, should be understood the comments of four able and well-disposed Y.M.C.A. executives.

Said one: "We did not list any 'co-operative activities and projects' because none are conducted. When any large city-wide Protestant religious activities are promoted, such as Thanksgiving Services, Christmas observations, Religious Emphasis Week, etc., they are sponsored solely by the Council of Churches. The Y.M.C.A., as one of the member organizations, co-operates in these projects in the same capacity as do all of the member churches of the Council. No projects are conducted as Y.M.C.A.-Council of Churches projects. In other words, we submerge ourselves in the larger body" (C).

And another: "As far as the Association is concerned, we consider our work with the Council of Churches as part of our regular job, and an expression of our desire to have a major place in the co-operative Christian community. We feel repaid for the time and effort which has been put into the Council because it has given us wide contacts with churches and a chance to work more closely with them" (B).

Another reasons thus: "It seems to me that the Y.M.C.A. should have a close relationship to the Council of Churches. In this way the Y.M.C.A. can make its largest contribution to the church life of the community. I do not minimize the

direct relationship to the individual church, but in the overall picture, the Y.M.C.A. has a great opportunity with the church body as a whole" (D).

Still another states this view aggressively: "Our Y.M.C.A. does not *co-operate* with the Council of Churches; we are as much a *part of the Council* as any church. No matter what activities or projects the Council embarks upon, we (the Y.M.C.A.) as a member do the same as any church" (B).

And yet, when all of this has been said, it must appear that one does not dispose of problems of relationship that are barriers to others similarly placed, for these are human as well as structural and interorganizational.

5. *Coming to Grips with the Problem.* Have the leaders of Y.M.C.A. and local Councils of Churches done this? One of the most discerning local executives, who has studied these matters for many years, felt that the report sent in on the recent inquiry "indicates of course that neither the Council nor the Y.M.C.A. has come to real grips with this question of relationship—partly because the policy of each agency has been an evolving one, and partly I think because neither agency was quite sure it wanted to enter into such a study because the outcome could not be foreseen" (D). The "will to unity" seems to require a readiness to consider all of the factors and possibilities without prejudice. When thus ready in mind and spirit, and without a priori judgments, how could any executive be unwilling to enter into a worthy inquiry? Is it possible that the assurance of such a complete and thoroughgoing review of the whole matter is not everywhere granted and assured?

It is much more than this paper can undertake to attempt to set forth all of the considerations that should be taken account of in determining the measure of readiness that obtains in any given community. There is evidence that such fundamental reexaminations are under way in a few communities.

In one of these, the Y.M.C.A. executive notes two fundamental questions:

"A. Does the Y.M.C.A. desire to have its *primary identification* with the Protestant forces of the community? It would also have a relationship with education and social work.

In the main, it appears to have already answered that question in the light of the following characteristics of its organization:

- a. It was organized by Protestant laymen and Protestant ministers.
- b. Its corporate control is in Protestant hands.
- c. Its Board of Directors is overwhelmingly Protestant.
- d. Its professional staff is required to be Protestant.

Nevertheless, it might be wise for the Association to review this whole matter again in the light of the present situation.

B. Do the Protestant forces of \_\_\_\_\_ desire to recognize a distinctive relationship with the Y.M.C.A., because of its Protestant control, a relationship which might be closer than with other agencies not willing to be so identified?

In \_\_\_\_\_, at least during the last ten years, this question has not been studied" (D).\*

### *Finally*

Those who examine this preliminary summary should not overlook a number of closely interwoven matters that probably do not need recognition in the particular analysis of relationships above. However, in any adequate picture, something should be said of the significance of the many ways in which Y.M.C.A. facilities and services, and in some cases, organizing initiative, have facilitated the development of the Church

---

\* It was subsequently reported from this community that, on the basis of fresh examination of such queries by the Council of Churches as well as by the Y.M.C.A., an agreement was worked out by which Church Council representatives on the Y.M.C.A. board, chosen by the latter, have been named.

Council movement and the effective embodiment of its legitimate interests. In some communities, these contributions should probably be recognized as hardly short of notable, notwithstanding the claims of "credit" occasionally found among persons of relatively short perspective.

While the Council movement is relatively new, it should never be overlooked during these years of adjustment that its importance is increasing. It thus becomes necessary to consider what are to be its most effective working relationships with the Y.M.C.A. which is a much older organization.

The wholesome ferment that seems to be present in many of the reporting communities should be taken as a sign that strong forces are at work, elements that can sooner or later prove useful, so long as they are centered in youth needs and Christian values, and not in doctrinairism.



## CHAPTER EIGHT

# Church Council Representatives Speak for Themselves

---

It is more than three years since a number of Church Council executives attended as guests six summer gatherings of Y.M.C.A. secretaries, and expressed with great frankness their views about Y.M.C.A. relationships with local Councils of Churches. The point and urgency of what they had to say has lost nothing since it was spoken. Since their discussions were carefully recorded and immediately summarized, they are introduced here by design, to sharpen and clarify the issue of relationships presented in the preceding chapter.

### ***Thesis***

Local Church Council officials from four leading cities, an executive officer of the Federal Council of Churches, and a prominent local pastor, were guests at six of the Secretarial Conferences. A member of the National Program staff also led a similar discussion at another. Approximately 750 secretaries attended these presentations which, in substance, followed the following general outline:

It was said to be a matter of great urgency, and pressed with deep conviction, that the Association should become much more closely identified with Protestant Church co-operative efforts in local communities, as expressed through Church Federations or Councils, facilitating their work, and become an ally if not an agent for their extension into other Association communities. Jointly planned co-operative projects should increase in number and importance.

Concern was expressed that

The Y.M.C.A. assumption that it "represents" Protestantism actually results in cutting the Association off from Protestant thought and effort.

Cordial personal relations between secretaries and pastors do not ensure collaboration that is sufficiently organic or authoritative.

Associations are typically confused as to their function; often so disregardful of their logical relationship and religious objective as to become nonsectarian and secular, i.e., a professional recreation agency; and so related to community forces and agencies, especially in relation to financial needs, as to have decreasing relationship with the Church.

Because of their peculiar appeal to youth of non-Protestant groups, Associations are changing their basic character at a time when they were more important than ever to the Protestant body as expressed in ecumenical effort.

The basic issue was said to be *whether or not strengthening the historic bond with Protestantism would mean narrowing the Association's membership base and the scope of its program*; or whether it would be possible to effect a closer and deeper alignment with widespread present-day co-operative Protestantism and continue to develop as a social agency with diversified constituency.

A secondary but important issue related to the nature of the co-operative relation desired, most spokesmen urging steps toward *an official interlocking of church representation on Association boards*, or other device to ensure continuous, formal contact and collaboration in policy-making.

The following pages present in more detail the issues set forth in these presentations, positive suggestions offered, notes on the reaction of secretaries, and other related comment. The above outline and the material that follows were prepared from three original statements presented by Church representatives, and eleven staff memoranda reporting the discussions.

### ***Reexamination and Realignment Considered Urgent***

Both Church and Association have shown marked changes over the years; the Association moving from the older evangelism through social emphasis and community service to essentially a welfare-agency position; the Church from a simple

one-day preaching service in a single room to seven-day programs for the entire family in community centers, developing federations and councils for united effort and larger influence.

The Nation now faces the most critical period in its life. A more Christian leadership is needed. Institutions must work hand in hand in the new world. We may have passed beyond the time when a mere "study of relationships" is desirable. The more important question is one of *function*, but there appears to be some uncertainty regarding the function of the Association, if not both Association and Church.

It was said that

"We must face the needs of the community and world objectively."

"We dare not compete for people's time and energy."

"The past dare not stand in the way of change."

"We must be honest with each other."

"We must face the tasks of the new day with a far deeper sense of commission."

"These days demand that institutions see eye to eye and work hand in hand."

Among the community changes that affect these relationships were mentioned:

Increase of tax-supported agencies and programs.

Penetration by other agencies into fields that formerly were unique to the Association's program.

Fund-raising techniques perfected by the Y.M.C.A., now used by the Church and other agencies.

Mass approach to community financing through Chests, the War Fund, etc., affects attitude of Church supporters.

The Y.M.C.A. was the pioneer, but other agencies now also go to the community for support.

Labor has become an aggressive factor in determining and financing community programs.

### ***Closer Functional Co-operation Urged—and Queried***

Concern was frequently expressed that the Association had latterly tended to "cut itself off" from Protestantism. It was said that "Its assumption that it in itself represents the Church has kept it from conferring with the churches in community

relationships, although the churches are not less important in the field of social engineering than community agencies." The "interfaith trend" was considered a danger "because in its world outreach program the Y.M.C.A. has exhibited certain tendencies to drift from its Protestant background. Actual relations at home have been very confusing and the ties have become less distinct as time goes on."

It was freely admitted that secretaries were church members and "deeply concerned to achieve Christian outcomes from their work with men and boys, to serve the Church, and to perform to the maximum their responsibility as a social-educational expression of the Church." While it was accepted that actual management of the Y.M.C.A. in the United States is still in Protestant hands, the inclusion of some non-Protestants in boards, and of large numbers of non-Protestants in the membership, was viewed in relation to its effect on avowedly Protestant identification.

Secretaries often stated that individual relations between secretaries and ministers were frequently very close and collaboration on important projects customary. However, it was admitted that sometimes "neither secretaries nor ministers had made a serious attempt to develop such a working relationship and that possibly it was a responsibility of Y.M.C.A. leaders to take initiative."

In two large communities, it was said, there is division among the Churches, one being liberal, the other conservative, so that there was no formal body of agreement or common ground on the basis of which Y.M.C.A. leaders could co-operate with the churches as a whole. Not a few secretaries believed that any effort to restrict Association relationships in the community to Protestant—or at least to by-pass non-Protestants among community youth—would be regarded with disfavor. Some said, "If we must be Protestant we are going to get out." It was claimed that not only do Roman Catholic and Jewish leaders recognize and appreciate frank statements of Protestant connection, but countered that substantial co-operation with these groups is impossible and that the Protestant forces represent among religious groups the only effective allies for the Association.

The significant issue then appeared to be whether or not

strengthening the historic bond with Protestantism would mean that the Association must narrow its membership base and the scope of its program. Some felt this would be true; but others believed it might be possible to effect "a closer and deeper alignment with Protestantism and at the same time broaden the base of membership and retain a diversified program."

Obviously a high sense of function would be necessary if this were to be done. It was charged "that the Church knows its function, but the 'Y' is not clear as to its function,—hence much of the difficulty."

It was strongly argued that mere personal relations between secretaries and ministers were not sufficient to carry the load of joint planning and effective collaboration in meeting community needs. Interlocking relations between the co-operative Church Councils, on the one hand, and the Y.M.C.A. boards, on the other, were envisaged by some as a necessary next step.

There was a natural concern to maintain the nonecclesiastical character of the Y.M.C.A., and to be free to express the Christian emphasis in both Protestant and Catholic directions insofar as they might have the privilege, hoping thus to "pioneer a new order between these two bodies but always to consult with the Church about what was done within its bounds." Discussion turned on how real this hope might be. It was argued that "if the Y.M.C.A. loses its Protestant base it will have no base at all. The Roman Catholic Church preaches and teaches loyalty to the Church. Protestantism is increasingly doing the same. Present Protestant weakness is largely due to past failures in this direction. Being broadly Protestant is not the same as being interfaith."

While it appeared to be the policy of the Y.M.C.A. "to serve all, regardless of race, color or creed," it was argued that "we cannot water down successfully in matters of spirit or belief. To do so is a disservice to those we would serve;" e.g., in Hi-Y work where the Y.M.C.A. was called a strong competitor with the churches for the time and loyalty of teen-agers, "its program is watered down as is often the case to adapt itself to an interfaith membership. The churches rightly complain that the Y.M.C.A. draws youth away from opportunity for Protestant

training in the churches without giving that training through the Hi-Y program." It was said that "the interfaith program of the 'Y' needs exploration by secretaries and church leaders working together, but the Y.M.C.A. seems to avoid such exploration."

Broad though the Y.M.C.A. program seeks to be, it was said that "neither the Y.M.C.A. nor Protestantism is competent to give any kind of specific religious teaching for those of Jewish or Roman Catholic faith." It was felt that the "C" of Y.M.C.A. must be a Protestant "C" since it cannot be both Protestant and Catholic. (Obviously such discussion did not take full account of the effective service of the Y.M.C.A. among certain Catholic constituencies abroad.)

*Underlying the foregoing considerations was the fundamental query as to whether the Y.M.C.A.'s traditional policy of autonomy in relation to the Protestant Church was justified in the past, adequate in the present and satisfactory for the future.*

### **Proposed Restudy of Y.M.C.A. Board Composition**

Mere "good relationships" between secretaries and ministers were held in these conferences to be not enough. Even the presence of secretaries in most local ministers' associations was believed not to provide for sufficiently close collaboration.

A few clergymen have been elected to Y.M.C.A. boards, usually on the basis of individual interest. Such plans appear to favor certain popular ministers. Rotation plans are rare. Official representation through designated representatives of Church Councils was urged by various visiting leaders. Others present held that such formal designation was unnecessary provided proper functional relations were set up e. g., through appropriate projects.

Since Y.M.C.A. boards are composed of lay persons from many denominations, are they not thus "representative" of the characteristic tradition of these bodies? Why does this not suffice? In answer it was said that "professional training and viewpoint (of clergy) are needed in Y.M.C.A. program planning since this also originates with professionally trained secretaries. Nonprofessionals are not competent for this work even when they are loyal board members." It was denied that the Y.M.C.A.

has been cut off from the Church because of actual lack of participation of clergy; but the rejoinder was made that "if the Y.M.C.A. cuts itself off from advice and thinking of clergy, it is just as far cut off from the Church as a local Y.M.C.A. carried on by nonprofessional employees would be cut off from the main stream of the Y.M.C.A. Movement." Moreover, "laymen frequently do not understand the implications of their faith as do clergymen trained theologically." It was said that USO experience supported the idea that Protestant clergymen can function effectively in governing boards. The presence of Catholic and other non-Protestant lay persons on Y.M.C.A. boards was criticized. Said a speaker, "The minute you begin this you begin to cut yourself off from the Protestant Church."

Other speakers suggested that the Y.M.C.A. "continue as an autonomous lay movement to become a significant arm of the churches for community service and interfaith activity." The relationship between them might then be either *ex officio* or consultative. There was little interest, apparently, in "bringing the Y.M.C.A. into the ecclesiastical tent."

If it be granted that "churches should be represented on Y.M.C.A. boards through agencies that express their corporate will," e. g., Church Council appointees, no device was suggested for doing this and still maintaining official election by Y.M.C.A. members.

Doubt was expressed by some secretaries that clergymen could adequately represent the *lay* element of church life. The Y.M.C.A. as a lay movement will always be concerned to approach their task of working with the Church as laymen with laymen and through approaches that arise out of informal rather than formal church relationships.

Some concern was expressed lest, in view of certain labor proposals for Y.M.C.A. board representation, and this fresh proposal from church sources, the Association might find it difficult to maintain its own individuality and emphasize its characteristic religious concern.

### ***Is the Y.M.C.A. a Part of the Protestant Ecumenical Movement?***

Tribute was paid by some speakers to the Y.M.C.A.'s service through the years in helping to bring leaders of Churches to-

gether and in affording the laity of Protestant Churches and others opportunity to fellowship and work together.

It was said that the Association's great history of helping to bring about Protestant co-operation is appreciated by the Churches, but many feel that, "instead of rejoicing in its success in this direction, it is refusing to recognize the ecumenical movement it helped to achieve." In this and similar statements it was held that the national, regional, or local Council of Churches, considered to represent the ecumenical movement, "has inevitably altered the function of the Y.M.C.A. in relation to the Church." The existence of local, regional, national and world Church Councils, comprehended in the word ecumenical (i. e., "the whole household of faith"), is believed to represent an "authoritative voice" of which the Y.M.C.A. should take account. It "should seek not only to develop new patterns of collaboration with the new expressions of ecumenical development, but should contribute leadership and other resources for ecumenical development in those communities where church organizations do not exist but Y.M.C.A.'s do."

Dislike of antithesis between Church and Y.M.C.A. was expressed by one secretary as follows: e. g., "The Y.M.C.A. is the laity of the Church helping to interpret and live the teachings of the Church. The Y.M.C.A. is unity in life; the Church is unity in doctrine."

Nevertheless, visiting leaders generally contended that however properly the Y.M.C.A. might claim to be a part of the ecumenical movement, its position in relation thereto remained inarticulate without some more formal or structural tie than appears to exist at present in local communities or otherwise.

### ***Attitudes that Facilitate and Prevent Complete Understanding***

A speaker cited "three situations that need to be remedied: (1) lack of knowledge by clergy of program skills of the Y.M.C.A.; (2) lack of knowledge by secretaries of how to approach the churches; and (3) tendency of some clergy and some secretaries to run their own shows."

It was said by a Church Council spokesman that the average minister often does not know his community or its resources well; that the Church is self-sufficient to many ministers; that



some ministers are afraid of the "Y's" "interdenominational" character and feel that the Y.M.C.A. is a genuine competitor; that the Y.M.C.A. is backward in social policy; and that the Y.M.C.A. stresses the "success" motif as against the obligations and self-denying commitment of the Christian life.

On the other hand, it was observed that secretaries sometimes fail to recognize the growing ecumenical interest; and that they often plan their work without regard to church plans or attitudes. Most secretaries do not agree that their programs are devoid of valid religious content. While they do not claim that the Y.M.C.A.'s record in public affairs and social action is beyond reproach, they do not relish comparison with other organizations that seem ill-founded or not generally in accord with the facts. Nor do they think that significant Y.M.C.A. efforts of later years to deal courageously with these problems should be ignored.

Obviously the problem of confidence requires something more constructive than mere criticism or smug self-sufficiency. Both the Church and the Y.M.C.A. reflect some of the reactionary tendencies of the time; and if Y.M.C.A. leaders and members lack enthusiasm for social reform, they are the typical product of American Protestantism and will rarely be able to proceed more rapidly or further toward social readjustment than churches in specific communities will stand ready to inspire and sustain them.

### ***Things that Might Be Done Together***

Three types of joint action proposed by one spokesman were: (1) official consultation and collaboration in the total program of community service; (2) collaboration to meet specific community needs; and (3) joint planning for the Y.M.C.A.'s own program of religious emphasis.

Another church visitor suggested that leaders of both the Church and the Y.M.C.A. must do better what they are now doing. Both should join in planning and carrying out projects of larger scope than ever before. Mutual interpretation of policy and program is needed on the part of both constituencies. Collaboration should be set up on local and national strategy for dealing with world economic and political problems.

In the communities with Councils of Churches, there should be strong committees on Church-Y.M.C.A. relationships, functioning also as Y.M.C.A. committees.

If there is no Council or Federation of Churches, the Y.M.C.A. should help to organize one.

Churches and Associations together should train young people for public life; and plan together "to capture the choice young men of cities for Christian leadership."

Various projects should be jointly planned and administered; e. g., Counseling service; a Christian Service Club meeting quarterly with Christian statesmen as speakers; fresh studies of projects relating to the family; needs of the Armed Services, etc.

Occasional events were proposed, such as a local joint meeting of the Church Council and Y.M.C.A. staff and board members; also similar group meetings of denominational directors on Christian education, state Council of Churches executives, and Y.M.C.A. town and county or other field men. Also it was proposed, such events as meetings of the Association of Church Council Secretaries might be made occasions for visitation by designated Association leaders.

---

## SIXTH DIAGNOSIS

The preceding pages present in substance what was said by visiting Church Council representatives, and attempt to indicate something of the reaction of secretaries who attended. In perspective, this rather unprecedented confrontation seems to suggest such dynamic elements as these:

1. *Plan and Sponsorship.* On the whole the summer visitation plan appeared to have been a good thing. It might have been more effective if sponsored by the Y.M.C.A.'s top executive organization.\* The reality of the presentations was self-evident. The planning for the events was

---

\* The visits were suggested by a member of the Industrial USO-Y.M.C.A. staff.

probably not developed with sufficient care. Such features, if repeated, should become a part of a more comprehensive and authoritative approach.

2. *Technique for Understanding.* The representatives were chiefly from local Church Council backgrounds and spoke a particular language. As "ambassadors" they represented perhaps more largely the interest of their own relationship than the effort to inquire into the state of mind of secretaries, or the modus for building greater understanding, concern and unity.
3. *Problems have Histories.* With perhaps one exception, grasp of the history of the problem was not indicated by the presentations. Instead, there were often fragmentary references to aspects which secretaries did not consider familiar or too relevant. A serious reading of the Wiley History\* would have immeasurably deepened the exchange. Unfortunately the History was not available. In particular, the Y.M.C.A.'s part in initiating active co-operation between church bodies and the experience of fellowship between laymen of many church bodies were largely minimized and apparently regarded as outmoded by the more formal types of representative relation centering in the experience, authority, and professional outlook of clergy in interdenominational co-operative relationships.
4. *Part and Whole.* The fact that formal local Council activity was and is somewhat limited in the number of organized communities was largely disregarded, although Associations carry on relations in many times the number without such Councils, and are usually active in church undertakings.

---

\* Reference should be made here to the *History of Y.M.C.A.-Church Relations in the United States* by S. Wirt Wiley (Association Press, 1944, 228 pages), as the most comprehensive and satisfactory study available on the wider relationship.

5. *Is Autonomy Significant?* The long-standing policy of Y.M.C.A. autonomy with reference to church organization appeared definitely to be challenged. However, one cannot be sure that a distinguished group of church leaders, such as bishops and outstanding pastors, would have made the same challenge or drawn the same structural or strategic conclusions.
6. *Upon Closer Examination.* Analysis of the problem in terms of one local Y.M.C.A. and one local Church or parish was not attempted. The discussion appeared to concentrate on relations between Y.M.C.A.'s in general and Church Councils everywhere, as seen by some particular Council executive. Inferences were freely drawn for all Church-Y.M.C.A. relations, including the collective Association and the Church ecumenical in its widest sense. Some such deductions may have been more emotionally based than scientifically derived.
7. *Proposal and Alternatives.* In view of the suggestion and even pressure for representative membership in Y.M.C.A. boards by some Council executives, it appeared that a service might be rendered if other alternatives, such as were listed in part in the preceding section, were carefully outlined with examples and critical supporting comment. In addition, it seemed it might be helpful if Association relations in the communities with Church Councils were studied more carefully over against similar relations in comparable communities without Councils.
8. *Confusion and Statesmanship.* The reports of the various discussions offered some evidence that secretaries were somewhat confused about the whole relationship. Personally loyal as individual churchmen, they were being called upon to reconcile a tradition that has changed considerably in recent years with the realities of their local

situations, their financial base, and the currently accepted role of the Association in community life. Perhaps the level of statesmanship required of them was beyond that which many secretaries can easily attain.

9. *The Way Forward.* The way forward seemed certain to require serious and fundamental rethinking by the Association's own leadership, with the aid of such instrumentalities as the Association Movement could bring to bear. Meantime, there appeared to be little disposition on the part of Y.M.C.A. secretaries to accept too aggressive pressure from church sources. On the other hand there was every probability of a real readiness to work earnestly toward a clarification of the larger relationship, assuming that tempers continue genuinely sympathetic in both directions while necessary adaptations are being worked out experimentally. It should be recognized by Association leaders, however, that some if not most church leaders approach the matter deductively rather than experimentally, starting with the nature of the Church. Such churchmen could easily feel that the suggested approach tends to evade fundamental considerations.

## CHAPTER NINE

# A Comparative Report on Y.M.C.A. Relationships with Councils of Churches and Councils of Social Agencies

---

The purpose of this report is to bring under careful description and review the network of relationships that involve the Y.M.C.A.'s of some fifty cities as they pertain to social work, as embodied in the Council of Social Agencies, on the one hand and Protestant religious work, as expressed through Councils of Churches. These Councils represent in each instance advanced stages of community organization, and often scores of agencies and church organizations. Y.M.C.A.'s themselves maintain direct relationships with many of these enterprises. In no sense would they wish their ties with these bodies to become less than co-operative and fraternal.

However, the possibility of sustaining even wider relationships with groups of these agencies and churches is of much importance to Associations that wish to make their own efforts as fruitful as possible in the fields of service for which they may have special competence. In particular, Associations are concerned that the closer ties they enter into with one group of agencies, or the Council that represents them, shall not work at cross purposes with their obligations to other groups of local organizations or their Councils. The Y.M.C.A., with its well-known Protestant background, does not wish its ever closer co-operative relationships in the field of social work to mean, in effect, a loosening of its traditional tie. Nor does it wish its own history as one of the older community organizations, or one

with a Protestant church connection, to limit its effective partnership as a responsible factor in an effectively organized community.

The problem for the Y.M.C.A. lies in reconciling its obligations in these two directions if and when they are in conflict; and in fulfilling the significant opportunities in both directions in such manner that conflict will not appear. To achieve these ends positively and affirmatively will require of the Y.M.C.A. a policy that is carefully thought through.

It was considered timely therefore to ascertain from the approximately fifty cities having both Y.M.C.A.'s, Councils of Churches, and Councils of Social Agencies, just what interrelations involving the Y.M.C.A. there were. A carefully designed inquiry was sent to the chief executive officer of each agency, each executive receiving the same form. The inquiry did not attempt to cover direct relationships between Councils of Churches and Councils of Social Agencies but included, for each of these and the Y.M.C.A., the following aspects:

Date of Organization

Council Structure and Y.M.C.A. participation of the Councils

Projects of the Councils and Y.M.C.A. Co-operation was sought or offered

Projects of the Y.M.C.A. on which Council Co-operation was sought or offered

Informal Consultation between Y.M.C.A. and Councils

Joint Use of Facilities

Attitudes

Characterizations of the Y.M.C.A.

Concluding Observations

### ***Date of Organization***

Comparison of the reported dates of organization, community by community, indicated that the Y.M.C.A. is much older than Councils of Social Agencies or Councils of Churches in these cities, although individual agencies and churches are doubtless contemporary if not, in many instances, older. Various types of ministers' organizations undoubtedly preceded the Church Councils by many years. Allowing for this consideration, however, the difference in age between these local Y.M.C.A.'s and

Councils is rather startling. The number of years by which the Y.M.C.A.'s founding preceded the organization of the earlier Council, which ever it may have been, averaged 56 years (median—58 years). No doubt the mere fact that the Y.M.C.A. has usually had such a long independent existence presents certain problems of co-operation and perhaps renders somewhat more difficult its adjustment to these generally more recent forms of organized community effort. The same could doubtless be said of certain other organizations.

### ***Council Structures and Y.M.C.A. Participation***

What was sought in the inquiry was simply a picture of the regular Departments or Divisions of these Councils in which the local Y.M.C.A. had representation. This question was asked of the two groups of Council officers only. While the picture shown in the accompanying Table is not too clear, some points are quite revealing.

#### **Y.M.C.A. REPRESENTATION IN DEPARTMENTS, DIVISIONS AND COMMITTEES OF COUNCILS OF SOCIAL AGENCIES AND COUNCILS OF CHURCHES**

	Y.M.C.A. PARTICIPATION:	
	IN COUNCILS OF SOCIAL AGENCIES	IN COUNCILS OF CHURCHES
<b>MANAGING BODIES:</b>		
Boards of Directors, Boards of Trustees, etc. ....	3 — 2*	9 — 2*
<b>EXECUTIVE GROUPS:</b>		
Executive Boards or Committees, Councils, Cabinets	4 — 1	11 — 1
<b>DIVISIONS:</b>		
Group Work; Recreation and Leisure Time; Youth Departments, Councils, Teen Ages; Welfare Council, Family Welfare .....	32 — 6	10 — 2
<b>COMMITTEES:</b>		
Interpretation, Public Relations .....	6 — 1	2 — 1
Camping .....	5	..
Financial, Budgeting ... ..	4	2
Health Program .. ..	4	..
Placement and Guidance .....	2	..
Race Relations, Interracial .....	..	7
War-time Services .....	2	2
Other Standing Committees .....	8	15
Total Committees .....	<u>31</u>	<u>28</u>

\* Numbers separated following certain entries, indicate Associations having similar representative relationships in both Councils.



This exhibit, which may be somewhat incomplete, indicates: (1) that in the cities studied, Y.M.C.A. representatives are to be found more often upon top boards and executive groups of Councils of Churches than those of Councils of Social Agencies; (2) that the reverse is emphatically the case in Divisional relations such as those indicated; and (3) that in standing Committees of these two Councils, the Y.M.C.A.'s of these cities were represented in substantially similar numbers. Taken altogether, however, there were important differences in certain of the fields within which these committees were at work. For example, several Y.M.C.A.'s were reported to be represented in Council of Social Agency Committees on Camping, Health Program, and Placement and Guidance, but no such representatives were reported under Church Council auspices, where such existed. Just the opposite situation was reported in committees dealing with race relations and interracial matters under Church Council auspices. Lack of definitive information as to what standing committees were in existence in these local Councils, whether or not the Y.M.C.A. had formal representation, made it difficult to derive conclusive judgments about the differences revealed by the exhibit. It would appear, however, that the involvement of at least thirty-two of the forty-seven reporting Y.M.C.A.'s at the Divisional level in the Council of Social Agency program, and the significance of certain of the fields assigned to standing committees, might possibly lend greater practical urgency to one set of relationships than the other.

The matter of official relationship of Y.M.C.A. personnel in these Councils was of special interest, especially as regards laymen, some of whom unquestionably had other than Y.M.C.A. interests and may have come into their Council relationship by other means than Y.M.C.A. designation. The following exhibit reveals the extent of such participation.

This is a revealing picture. Nearly 400 different persons, regarded as leaders by the Y.M.C.A. were actively involved in some phase of Council activity. One in six of them were related to both Council programs. While professional workers slightly outnumbered the laymen in these relationships, the outstanding fact of the display is that about twice as many laymen and

Y.M.C.A. LEADERS IN 47 CITIES OFFICIALLY RELATED AS MEMBERS OF COUNCILS OF SOCIAL AGENCIES AND COUNCILS OF CHURCHES, OR EITHER OF THEM, OR IN UNITS OR PROJECTS RELATED THERETO.

	LAYMEN	SECRETARIES	TOTAL
Y.M.C.A. LEADERS:			
In Councils of Social Agencies .....	122	167	289
In such Councils only .....	112	115	227
In these and Councils of Churches .....	10	52	62
In Councils of Churches .....	69	88	157
In such Councils only .....	59	36	95
In these and Councils of Social Agencies ....	10	52	62
Net Different Persons .....	181	203	384
Per Cent .....	47.2	52.8	100 0
In both Councils .....	6.1	25.6	16.1
In Councils of Social Agencies only . ....	61.8	56.6	59.1
In Councils of Churches only .....	32.6	17.7	24.7

secretaries were related to Council of Social Agency efforts as to those of Church Councils.

Of greater import than these structural relationships, undoubtedly, are the actual projects or tasks jointly undertaken or upon which, regardless of initiative, co-operation was sought and received, or given.

***Projects of the Councils on Which Y.M.C.A. Co-operation Was Sought or Offered***

It was significant that 158 projects involving Y.M.C.A. co-operation with the Councils of Social Agencies in these 47 communities were reported by executives of those Councils, and that 123 projects involving Y.M.C.A.-Council of Churches co-operation were reported by executives of the latter body. Altogether, a total of 281 co-operative projects was so reported.

Before looking comparatively at the classifications of these projects displayed below, it is worth commenting that here, most probably, rather than in terms of representation and structure, may be found the true point of reference for evaluating Y.M.C.A. relationships with either or both of these highly influential bodies.

It is difficult to present satisfactorily such a varied and complex matter as this complex pattern of community co-operation.

GENERAL CLASSIFICATION OF CO-OPERATIVE PROJECTS IN 47 CITIES  
(Classified by *Subject*)

158 of which were reported by Executives of Councils of  
Social Agencies and Y.M.C.A.'s:

COUNCIL OF SOCIAL AGENCIES WITH Y.M.C.A.:	NUMBER OF EACH TYPE	NUMBER OF PROJECTS
1 Agency Programs .....	3	3
2 Armed Forces, Veterans, etc. ....	5	12
3 Campaigns .....	2	6
4 Camping .....	8	19
5 Church Federation .....	1	1
6 Conferences .....	2	2
7 Field Projects .....	3	6
8 Group Work Division, etc. ....	13	28
9 Interracial, Negro, etc. ....	7	9
10 Membership .....	2	2
11 Personnel .....	3	3
12 Public Relations .....	2	2
13 Recreation—Public, Private .....	17	24
14 Social Hygiene .....	2	2
15 Youth Program .....	14	29
16 Vocational, Information, Referral .....	2	3
17 Miscellaneous: Committees .....	5	5
Other .....	3	3
Totals .....	94	158

123 of which were reported by Executives of Councils of  
Churches and of Y.M.C.A.'s:

COUNCIL OF CHURCHES WITH Y.M.C.A.:	NUMBER OF EACH TYPE	NUMBER OF PROJECTS
2 Armed Forces, Veterans, etc. ....	7	19
3 Finance Campaigns .....	4	14
4 Camping .....	1	1
5 Church Federation .....	7	10
9 Interracial, Negro, etc. ....	1	5
11 Personnel, Counselling, Training .....	5	10
12 Public Relations .....	2	2
13 Recreation—Public, Private .....	3	3
15 Youth Program .....	9	11
17 Miscellaneous (Committees) .....	2	2
Additional Topics:		
a. Defense Communities .....	2	2
b. Evangelism .....	3	5
c. International .....	4	9
d. Religious Education .....	3	5
e. Religious Observances .....	2	7
f. Use of Y.M.C.A. Facilities .....	5	7
18 Miscellaneous .....	9	11
Totals .....	69	123

It seems impracticable to exhibit by individual cities or otherwise the nearly three hundred individual projects submitted. These projects have been classified by *subject* or topic, and by *method*. Separate displays are shown for each purpose. At the left of each display is shown a classification of the 158 projects involving Y.M.C.A.-Council of Social Agency co-operation. At the right of each display appears a similar presentation of the 123 projects representing Y.M.C.A.-Church Council co-operation.

For each group of projects columns to the right indicate the

#### GENERAL CLASSIFICATION OF CO-OPERATIVE PROJECTS IN 47 CITIES

(Classified by *Methods* Used)

158 of which were reported by Executives of Councils of Social Agencies and Y.M.C.A.'s:

COUNCIL OF SOCIAL AGENCIES WITH Y.M.C.A.:	NUMBER OF EACH TYPE	NUMBER OF PROJECTS
1 Community Councils, Co-ordination .....	7	9
2 Divisions and Committees .....	20	39
3 Youth Committees and Programs .....	9	18
4 Specific Projects .....	15	23
5 Conferences and Institutes .....	5	6
6 Leadership Training, Staff Study, etc. ....	6	11
7 Campaigns .....	2	6
8 Studies, Surveys, etc. ....	20	29
9 General Projects (Method not stated) .....	10	17
Totals .....	94	158

128 of which were reported by Executives of Councils of Churches and Y.M.C.A.'s:

COUNCIL OF CHURCHES WITH Y.M.C.A.:	NUMBER OF EACH TYPE	NUMBER OF PROJECTS
1 Church Councils, Co-ordination .....	4	5
2 Divisions and Committees .....	8	11
3 Youth Committees and Programs .....	8	9
4 Specific Projects .....	16	30
5 Conferences, Institutes, Meetings .....	9	16
6 Leadership Training, Study Groups, etc. ....	6	16
7 Campaigns .....	3	11
8 Studies, Surveys .....	..	..
9 General Projects (Method not stated) .....	7	10
10 Special Occasions, Observances .....	2	7
11 Use of Y.M.C.A. Building, etc. ....	6	8
Totals .....	69	123

number of each sub-classification or type, as well as the total number.

What may be said of these comparisons?

Clearly, there is much "traffic," that is, a heavy volume or stream of co-operation, in both relationships.

There is considerable range in the variety and function of these projects. The fabric of community co-operation is close-knit. Though there are some common factors, no clear formal pattern appears.

Inasmuch as the projects reported were those in which Y.M.C.A. co-operation, in either direction, was a factor, it is possible, though it seems unlikely, that a still broader field of collaboration may be potential if not active, as between Church Councils and Councils of Social Agencies in some if not all of these cities. The bearing of this possibility upon Y.M.C.A. activities is important since, if such direct co-operation between the Councils exists in significant areas to which the Y.M.C.A. is not a party, this could imply that the Y.M.C.A.'s tie with either body was somewhat marginal; while if no such broad field of inter-Council co-operation has developed, it would suggest that organizations like the Y.M.C.A. tend, in a measure, to serve as nexus. In some cities, Church Federations have representation in Councils of Social Agencies, usually because of their welfare enterprises.

It seems significant that under Divisions and Committees, including Youth Committees and Programs, the reported co-operative projects should total fifty-seven (36.1%) in the Council of Social Agencies list, and only twenty, or 16.2 per cent of the total in the Council of Churches list. There, however, the proportion of Specific Projects is somewhat larger. This is also true for Conferences and Institutes, Leadership Training and Campaigns.

Studies and Surveys represent 17.8 per cent of all Y.M.C.A.-Council of Social Agencies projects, but none were reported in the case of Church Councils. Can this be a revealing commentary on the conception of needs and services entertained by these two community-wide interagency systems?

Outstanding in the degree of correspondence, in the displays

by *subject*, are the two-direction co-operative projects relating to Armed Forces and Veterans, Youth Program, and Interracial.

Notable for seeming disparity is the Camping program where Y.M.C.A.-Church Council co-operation is slight indeed compared with the 19 projects reported in the other list. The same may be said for Recreation. This picture is somewhat but not entirely offset by the additional topical fields reflecting specialized religious interests.

Thus it appears that there are substantial areas of community service programs in which both groups of Councils, as well as the Y.M.C.A., and possibly other agencies as well, operate. It is believed that formal or organic relations between these Councils, such as are mentioned above, are relatively rare. This is not surprising in view of many distinctive functions of each type of Council, differences in membership philosophy and composition, and in their social and religious orientation with reference to the local and wider national community. With each of them, yet between them, stands the Y.M.C.A., symbolizing rather than satisfying the need for a principle of relationship that might mean much to the local community, and to human welfare generally.

### ***Projects of the Y.M.C.A. on Which Council Co-operation Was Sought or Offered***

The prospect of the early emergence of a wholly satisfactory philosophy and scheme of co-operative relationships, either as between the two Council bodies, or between the Y.M.C.A. and either of them, must await, one fears, some more adequate conception of possibilities, greater appreciation each of the other, and more precise and mutually accepted definition of areas in which specific joint efforts are pledged and made good.

For example, in these forty-seven cities, executives of the two Councils and the Y.M.C.A. listed 191 projects of the Y.M.C.A. in which co-operation by the two Councils was sought or offered.

In thirty-six cities Council of Social Agencies executives reported forty-three such projects, and Y.M.C.A. executives reported fifty-one. Unless words utterly deceive, but three of these reported projects matched, so that a total of ninety-one

projects was actually listed by the two groups of reporters, only three of which appeared to be identical. This is fantastic indeed. Fifteen of these "Y.M.C.A. projects in which Council of Social Agencies co-operation was sought or offered" were named by the Y.M.C.A. executive, but nothing concerning these was offered by the Council of Social Agency executive. Conversely, the latter named twenty-three projects, similarly designated, concerning which the Y.M.C.A. executive reported nothing whatever. Can this really be co-operation?

In thirty-six cities, five of them differing from the previous thirty-six, Church Council executives reported forty-six, and Y.M.C.A. executives reported fifty-one other "Y.M.C.A. projects on which Church Council co-operation was sought or offered." Only seven of these projects matched, so that a total of ninety different projects was reported. This means that in eighty-three separate and specific instances, Church Council and Y.M.C.A. executives reporting on co-operation in matters in which the Y.M.C.A. was the interested sponsor cited in over 90 per cent of the instances, enterprises that could not be identified as the same. Again, ten projects were listed by the Y.M.C.A. only, where Church Council reporters listed nothing; but they, on the other hand, listed eighteen other projects in communities where Y.M.C.A. executives saw or reported nothing.

This is not co-operation. It is absurdity.

The inquiry form itself may have been faulty, though hardly to the degree this suggests. There remains the possibility, seemingly remote, that in the case of some of these instances, co-operation was "sought" but not obtained, or "offered" but not accepted. But this does not seem reasonable in view of the displays in Chapter Seven and elsewhere. Even if something be allowed in the direction of carelessness in reporting in any inquiry that gave evidence of good faith and serious motivation at many points, one cannot avoid a reluctant conclusion.

It is that the "co-operation" reported as between the Y.M.C.A.'s of these cities and either or both of the Councils, where it existed at all, represented such lack of definition and implied such generalized if not superficial interest, as to raise the question of its validity and worth as a force in community life.

This need not and does not imply that the projects themselves, to the extent they were real and such as their listings suggest, were not timely and highly useful, or that they would not have been such, under whatever auspices, without the "co-operation" alleged.

### ***Informal Consultations***

The discussion of this and the remaining topics of the inquiry must be brief. It was always recognized that some of the most valuable instances of co-operation proceed informally, and represent each drawing on the other's resources with reference to formal requests. Respondent executives in all three relationships were asked to say what was their own practice in *initiating* such consultation. Frequent or habitual consultations of this type were reported by about half of the Y.M.C.A. and Church Council executives, in relation to the other, and a slightly larger proportion as between Y.M.C.A. and Council of Social Agencies executives. In nearly half of the instances, therefore, such contacts were only occasional or infrequent. This would seem to be thin soil for the growth of genuine collaboration.

### ***Joint Use of Facilities***

This picture was not very definitive. It has long been known that Y.M.C.A. equipments are used by all sorts of organizations. The lists of agencies and organizations using Y.M.C.A. buildings is similar to that reported annually for Year Book purposes. It did not seem that reporters were able to give information about specific use of Y.M.C.A. facilities as a *part of* Council programs. Exceptions were certain athletic competitions which may have been conducted under Church Council auspices. A summary was made of items relating to Y.M.C.A. use of Church facilities. Youth program features are prominent in this list; athletics stand next. More informing is the response to the question on further provisions for joint use of Y.M.C.A. facilities. This list suggested that Y.M.C.A. properties are more or less regarded as community properties, presumed to be available to all, and use of which may not mean any particularly close act of co-operation.



### **Attitudes**

Because Y.M.C.A. relations with churches and social agencies have become more complex in recent years, and each series of relationships has to some extent affected the other, a series of questions attempted to bring out existing attitudes.

In the view of most Y.M.C.A. executives, participation in the Council of Social Agencies had no effect upon the relationship to the Council of Churches. A number thought the effect favorable both ways. The few Council executives responding on this point concurred. A few secretaries mentioned the religious or Protestant aspect of Y.M.C.A. relations as not wholly in line with the objectives of Councils of Social Agencies where an inclination was noted to question the validity of the Y.M.C.A.'s Protestant affiliation, and to regard it as a social rather than a religious agency. One Y.M.C.A. executive had "said openly in the Council of Social Agencies that the Y.M.C.A.'s first relationship was and should continue to be to the Protestant Churches and not to the Council of Churches."

There was strong support voiced by both Y.M.C.A. and Council of Social Agencies executives as to the effect of Y.M.C.A. participation in the latter Council on Y.M.C.A. relations with other social agencies. They said it "promoted mutual understanding," "strengthened good working relationships," "stimulated co-operation and joint planning," "decreased the tendency to isolation" and "enabled the Y.M.C.A. to be more cognizant of developments in the recreation and group work field." Council of Social Agencies executives stressed these latter points, and stressed the "clarification of areas of work," "greatly strengthening the work of the Council," and "making the Y.M.C.A. a leading force among agencies in the group work and recreation field." In four cities, however, it was reported that the Y.M.C.A. had not participated extensively, and in one that "Y.M.C.A. aloofness was a constant irritation to agencies trying to work together." Fifteen secretaries expressed their view that Y.M.C.A. participation in the Council of Churches had no adverse effect upon Y.M.C.A. relationships with other social agencies.

To the parallel question as to how the Y.M.C.A. relation with individual churches was affected by its Church Council

relationship, the secretaries responding considered the effect favorable, as did Church Council spokesmen. Some of the latter said this kind of participation "increased appreciation of the Y.M.C.A. as an element in the Protestant religious and social service structure"; "encouraged church interest in the Y.M.C.A. program," and "greater confidence and appreciation of its service." One Church Council executive thought it "made the Y.M.C.A. a unifying agency in the co-operation of all churches," and led people to think of the Y.M.C.A. as "more definitely Protestant." In five instances, however, Church Council executives said there had been "no real participation" by the Y.M.C.A. Again a group of Y.M.C.A. executives, nineteen in number, thought that Y.M.C.A. participation in the Council of Social Agencies had no adverse effect, and possibly had a favorable effect, on the Y.M.C.A.'s relationship with local churches.

However, a minority group of churchmen regretted the "tendency to regard the Y.M.C.A. as a social rather than religious agency"; felt that "the gulf between the Y.M.C.A. and the local churches had been widened"; "that the conservative church group was not enthusiastic;" and that the "greater readiness of agencies to co-operate has absorbed time and strength that might have been devoted to church relations."

It is difficult to draw a reliable conclusion from this brief summary of attitudes reported by Y.M.C.A. and Council executives. The evidence shows how deeply involved the Y.M.C.A. is in both sets of relationships. This basic fact must continue in the foreground as this report proceeds. It will help to give the problem greater tangibility if, without concern as to order, some of the issues involving conflict of interest are listed. While the situation in each relationship is usually reported as broadly satisfactory, there is evidence of less than full-orbed co-operation, and in not a few cases, of definite tension, as these original comments suggest:

Principal local issue is with the Chest, of which Council of Social Agencies is a department. Chest was until 1944 a straight-jacket on "Y" and other youth-serving organizations, has resisted efforts to break out, and penalized them. Council too much inclined to go along with the Chest. Situation improving.

Due to representation in USO of Catholics, Jews, Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., and Salvation Army but not of churches, co-operation in this field has been difficult except through churches giving what they were asked to or told to do. This tension has never been resolved.

“Y” has made no call for co-operation, although it has conducted such a major project as a building fund campaign within past year. No consultation with Council of Social Agencies re location, design, program nor did Council receive a prospectus to use in responding to inquiries directed to it.

Tension resulted in the Centennial Observance due to the setting up of a “Y” Committee of Clergymen before asking co-operation of the Federation.

No tension as everyone is too busy to be bothered, but I feel that “Y” needs better informed leadership.

As Council of Social Agencies was being formed, Y.M.C.A. asked that there be clarification of the function of the Board of Directors of the Chest and that of the Council of Social Agencies. Reason—the suggestion has been made that a community agency first clear its problems with the Council before coming to the Chest. Our belief was that when any question arose we would want to take the matter up with the Chest Board with no in-between body. Other agencies agreed and point was granted.

### ***What Is the Y.M.C.A.?—Some Characterizations***

This is a simple question, but the answer is neither obvious nor simple. Assuming that at least some common understanding on this point would be a prerequisite of worthy co-operation between the Y.M.C.A. and the two Councils, the three groups of executives were asked to indicate what they considered the most apt designation of the Y.M.C.A. Four groups of items or “fields” were used, all drawn from common parlance, and a composite of the rankings was made for each group of executives alone, with a final summary of all of these. There are perhaps not many surprises in these comparisons, but nu-

merous sharp discrepancies are indicated. When it is recalled that these three executives work side by side in the same community, and presume to engage in significant co-operative projects, it is evident that these basic conceptions about what the Y.M.C.A. is and is not are bound to have an important bearing upon what happens.

What is the Y.M.C.A.?

The three groups of executives seem to think of it as most aptly described by the terms "Youth-serving Organizations," "Fellowship," and a "Service Agency." No other characterization in this field or group of possibilities stands with these. All of them agree, also, that the Y.M.C.A. is *not* a "Social Action Group"!

At the other end, they consider the Y.M.C.A. both "community-wide" and "building-centered," but the Council executives consider it more the latter than the former. Y.M.C.A. executives, who think it clearly community-wide, like also to think of their Association as "nation-wide" and "world-wide." To Council executives, however, this is much less apparent. (In this case as in each other group of designations, a sharp difference in score-value divides those below the line from those above.)

Of course, to all of those executives, the Y.M.C.A. is "character-building" and "recreational." Y.M.C.A. men think it is also "religious," but both groups of Council executives spurn this term, considering the noncommittal term "leisure-time" more apt. Both groups rank "educational" above "religious" as a characterization.

The most controversial display is left to the last, though the seeds of controversy, and perhaps an effective deterrent to genuine collaboration, may be seen above. Secretaries consider the Y.M.C.A. "interdenominational," a term denied by Church Council leaders, though Council of Social Agencies executives recognize it. These latter also think that "Protestant" is the most apt designation, which the others admit rather than prefer. The appellation "nondenominational," which Church Council leaders put at the top of the list, is neither preferred nor, presumably, understood by Y.M.C.A. executives who, one assumes, should be their closest collaborators; nor by Council

of Social Agencies leaders concerned with the planning and practical strategy of community welfare. Almost equally at variance are the executives' positions in regard to "nonsectarian" and "interfaith" characterizations.

Those who have the keeping and destiny of the Y.M.C.A. at heart, if not entirely in their hands, would do well to ponder

## SUMMARY OF Y.M.C.A. CHARACTERIZATIONS

## MADE BY

EXECUTIVES OF COUNCILS OF SOCIAL AGENCIES (CSAs),  
COUNCILS OF CHURCHES (CCHs) AND Y.M.C.A.'S IN 47 CITIES

RANK*	MOST ADEQUATE CHARACTERIZATION	AS RANKED BY		
		CSAS	CCHs	Y.M.C.A.'S
1	YOUTH-SERVING ORGANIZATION	1	1	1
2	FELLOWSHIP	3	3	2
3	SERVICE AGENCY	2	2	3
4	Service Center	6	4	6
5	Youth-Membership Organization	4	5-5	5
6	Youth Organization	7	5-5	4
7	Membership Corporation	5	7	7
8	Social Action Group	8	8	8
1	INTERDENOMINATIONAL	2	5	1
2	PROTESTANT	1	3	3
3	NON-SECTARIAN	3	7	4
4	Interfaith	4	4	2
5	Non-Denominational	5	1	5
6	Interconfessional	7	6	6
7	Sectarian	6	..	7
1	CHARACTER-BUILDING	1	2-5	1
2	RECREATIONAL	2	2-5	2
3	LEISURE-TIME	3	1	4
4-5	Health Education	4	6	5
4-5	Religious	6	7	3
6	Educational	5	4	6
7	Social	7	5	8
8	Citizenship Training	8	9	7
9	Welfare	..	8	9
1	COMMUNITY-WIDE	2	2	1
2	BUILDING-CENTERED	1	1	3
3	NEIGHBORHOOD	3	3	4
4	Nationwide, Worldwide	4	4	2
5	Trade Area	5	5	5

\* Final ranks were determined by assigning values from five down to one for the items of each field chosen by executives for the first five positions; then combining these values for each group of executives separately; and finally by combining the values so determined into a single ranking representing all three groups of executives.

the significance of the picture of the Y.M.C.A. seen by such competent observers in forty-seven of America's leading cities. Should they do this, they may find an important insight into the Y.M.C.A.'s own self-understanding, and a clue to its relations in the future not alone with the churches, but with the dynamic social forces of community and nation.

---

### SEVENTH DIAGNOSIS

It is necessary now to bring again to the fore the particular diagnostic purpose of this study. Thoughtful readers may wish to turn back, for the sake of perspective, to certain of the preceding diagnoses to ensure that in the analysis now required they do not impute to the Y.M.C.A. a disciplined unity it does not really have, or expect of it a consistent and single-minded identification of its energies with specific traditional or logical objectives it may no longer be able to manifest or prefer.

At this juncture in our progressive diagnosis, the following points compel attention:

1. *The Y.M.C.A. is profoundly involved in the total life of the community*, and the realities of community dynamics no longer permit the Y.M.C.A. to address its interest and services to any one sector of the community. In a sense it formerly did this, probably more through social and economic "selection" than otherwise, so that in time its essentially middle-class orientation and its Protestant tradition became concomitant if not correlate. They may have been casual also. But latterly, it has become an acknowledged objective of the Y.M.C.A., in which it is not certain that Protestant church leaders would always stand ready to approve, that the base of Y.M.C.A. constituency, program and support be substantially broadened. This latter has been taking place for many years. Y.M.C.A.'s do not run themselves on ideas alone. In the realities of com-

munity dynamics, therefore, the Y.M.C.A.'s are powerfully involved with the public in terms of those they seek to serve, the greatly-diversified methods by which they serve them, and the means by which this service is made possible. It is difficult to envisage forces strong enough to reverse this trend.

2. *Laymen direct the destinies of the Y.M.C.A.* This fact is sometimes not sufficiently recognized or its importance adequately understood. By and large, these laymen are Protestant in faith, and usually active in local church life. As laymen, with other laymen from other local churches, however, they become, partly as a result of the training their churches have given them, largely freed from the specific denominational or sectarian interest, men with a community-wide point of view, devoted men deeply concerned with what needs to be done with and among youth, practical men accustomed and ready to make practical plans and arrangements—financial, operational, strategic. More often than not, they are likely to be not too sure of an interorganizational or structural involvement that does not stem from interests like their own, and free to express their concern in the ways experience has proven wise. It is relevant here to observe that where proposals have been made to add persons from the ranks of Labor to Y.M.C.A. boards, it is usual to suggest that such persons also be chosen from those who have had the experience and training responsible Y.M.C.A. laymen prize.

3. *The Y.M.C.A. is committed to interorganizational co-operation.* It is a participant in, and in certain instances has taken some initiative in forming, such bodies as the National Social Welfare Assembly, the Associated Youth-Serving Organizations, the American Association of Group Workers, the American Association of Physical Education, Health and Recreation, the International Council of Religious Education, and numerous other similar groups. The United Service Organiza-

tions was, of course, such an instance. It is generally believed in the Y.M.C.A. that such relationships are both wise and profitable, whether on the community or national level. Association leaders know from experience that such relationships sometimes impose limits and always impose obligations. They know also that they rarely or never involve compromise of distinctive objectives so long as these are worthily pursued and effectively demonstrated. The responsible Y.M.C.A. leader has long since learned to regard those who work toward the same objectives or any aspect of them as welcome allies, even as colleagues and collaborators. Yet this type of leader will also realize that such relations require high standards of competence and an objectivity that rises above organizational privilege or partisanship.

4. *The best test of co-operation between organizations lies close at hand.* One might continue and say, — “in the community.” It is sometimes said that by being organized around community welfare, social work has and uses an obviously appropriate method of building unity. It is the method of the laboratory. It means tangibility. It requires financing. The *validity* of services as well as the need for them attains special importance. This may account for the prominence of surveys in the classification of activities of Councils of Social Agencies (see Page 106). It may be unfair to suggest that there is no “ecumenical” concept in social work to draw attention from immediate local relationships; though the great conceptions of national welfare, the steadily rising professional standards, and the dream of the Four Freedoms “anywhere in the world” may serve as such, at least in universality. But by working out relationships more through projects than structures, and in immediate and local rather than ultimate terms, may not an important light be thrown on the path ahead?

5. *The course ahead lies through improved self-under-*



*standing.* This may be true for individuals. It must be true for organizations. It would be rewarding to reflect upon the psychological problem in resolving a "Which Way?" dilemma. Such an alternative, or the uncertainty that may result from so regarding it, assumes that whatever the benefits may be found by either course, there are certain to be hazards also; and, moreover, but *one* course may be taken. Some persons regard Y.M.C.A. relations with the churches, and Y.M.C.A. relations with community social work, in this sense. And yet, from the reports obtained in this study, there are many more, apparently, who would resolve the "Which Way" dilemma with a resounding "Both." Can this be possible?

It could be possible, one feels, if not by the terms of strict logic, by the practical terms of accommodation. If one cannot go both ways, there may be still another way, a middle way. Or, it may be found, there were never really two ways, but only one—a broader way! In concluding this important if highly complex account of a study laid at the heart of this problem, one may discern that only by having a clear sense of function or "mission" can the Y.M.C.A. and its leaders make the consistent judgments and worthy adjustments needed in identifying and implementing their part of the common objectives of social work and the churches in community life. There is uncertainty here, in much contemporary Y.M.C.A. thought, for the appeal cannot be made to origins and tradition alone. Needed, greatly needed, is a revealing self-understanding, a fundamental and energizing conception, capable of mobilizing its resources and polarizing its impact upon present-day community life.

## CHAPTER TEN

# The USO Episode in Y.M.C.A.-Church Relationships

---

The Y.M.C.A. by its long experience with the relationships between agencies in the local community, long before the coming of World War II, had become firmly convinced of the desirability of joining forces with other community organizations when this would ensure a more effective service on behalf of young people, and when it would not abridge unduly the capacity of an agency to continue and enrich its own unique contribution to the common end. As already stated, the Y.M.C.A. became "committed to interorganizational co-operation."

### *How the Y.M.C.A. Interpreted its USO Partnership*

In as much as the story of Y.M.C.A.-Church contacts and services through USO has been fully reported elsewhere, it is sufficient here to be concerned only with these relationships *per se*, and not with the enormous volume of service rendered, whether co-operatively, or by each agency on its own. Necessarily we are here forced to consider these relationships in the perspective of 1948, looking back over the enterprises and the thinking of the war years as they bore on postwar needs and conditioned future opportunities. What then, was the meaning of the USO experience for Y.M.C.A.-Church relations today, and for the future?

Even for such a purpose it is desirable to recall, so far as possible, how this co-operative relationship with other community agencies seemed to Y.M.C.A. leaders as they entered upon it. Rather than to attempt now to recapture these attitudes of 1940

and 1941, let us lift bodily from the Y.M.C.A. Year Book account of that period the interpretation then commonly accepted.

It is perhaps not too much to suggest that United Service Organizations, usually designated as USO, is a product of the recent cultural trend in this country. It stands as something quite unique in the recent history of social and religious effort and, although expressing itself in terms of the war emergency, has much broader significance. The steps that brought the six co-operating organizations together in late 1940 are generally known, and need not be repeated here. Probably not enough has been said or written, however, about the factors that made this kind of organized effort logical, if not inevitable.

The earlier discussions have described the situation at the close of World War I and the announcement of a new government policy under which the relationship of private agencies would perhaps be different than previously if the nation was again to go to war. The experience of the Third War Work Campaign in 1918 had brought leaders of the several agencies together in a mutually beneficial manner, and associated them with a similar service in the public mind. The deterioration of the world situation and the concurrent definition of American policy made it clear, during the spring and summer of 1940, that extensive concentrations of American youth were contemplated. In contrast with previous war-service experiences, agencies were challenged to set up procedures for serving these youth before the country was itself at war. These services were not predicated upon the early advent of hostilities at home or overseas, but rather upon peace-time service to successive Selective Service classes (including, of course, all units of enlisted service), the larger part of whom would probably be in training for approximately a year's service under conditions permitting considerable leisure time, frequent leave, and the like. It was also generally assumed that the service would be rendered within continental United States. The likelihood of involvement in armed conflict was envisaged but somewhat discounted, while the possibility of sending forces overseas was given relatively little thought.

#### PART OF A CULTURAL TREND

Under such circumstances, it was natural for these agencies to propose services closely in line with peace-time conceptions of their distinctive mission. They were religious agencies. As such, they offered to the government their readiness and resources to serve men

in camp and other concentrations. This they did, not only as *religious* agencies, but as *community* agencies. They accepted, and even rejoiced in, the government's policy, which called for the Army itself undertaking educational and recreational as well as religious (chaplain's) services within military reservations. As community agencies, they felt themselves able to function in the communities adjacent to camps in a twofold representative manner: (1) through them, families and friends of the local community back home might well feel they had representatives directly concerned for the welfare of home-town youth; and (2) they would represent civilian and private concern among those who, under the conditions, had to be almost entirely subject to the direction and control of government authority.

The innovation of the USO had other significant implications. As against the spirit that had engendered suspicion and, in some countries, outright persecution, the USO brought a testament of unity among members of the three great faiths of the Western World. With all mutual respect, they were determined to stand together in testifying to the spirit of religious freedom and tolerance in the years of its flagrant disavowal in many lands. This determination was a part, of course, of a larger trend; but it lent significant validity to that trend as well as gained from it, by their presumption as religious agencies in the service of the nation's youth, to stand in unity as an interconfessional and interfaith enterprise. During years of increasingly widespread and earnest *discussion* of the principles of religious unity, these agencies were ready to *act* unitedly. It is possible that this aspect may, with the passing of time, be considered one of the most significant features of the present experience. It has symbolic and prophetic character.

Nor should it be overlooked that, in the case of the Y.M.C.A., there had been an extensive world-wide experience in working co-operatively among those of other great religious faiths and with representatives of all Christian bodies.

The principle of co-operative rather than competitive action was chosen deliberately. It was not forced. No overbody said: "This shall be." Free agencies, with their rich tradition of independence and their special interpretations of the service and function of religion, chose, through their own authorized representatives, to collaborate in this emergency service among American youth. This daring agreement, so heartily entered into, was not an accident or something thought up overnight. It arose from the deep conviction and widening stream of practice among social agencies particularly,

and, significantly, its source in this experience is somewhat more clear than in the recent tradition of religious co-operation. It is true that there are important manifestations of the latter, as between the different religious faiths—for example, the important work in recent years of the National Conference of Jews and Christians. But the experience of twenty years of local community effort, through community chests and councils of social agencies, was surely at work in the early overtures that resulted in the USO; while the fruitful services of the National Conference of Social Work and other “interbodies” had developed a group of leaders in almost every community and in key positions of national leadership that were ready for a program that was collaborative and based on responsibility, agreed standards, and mutual respect.

The USO agencies likewise determined that a single approach to the American people would be needed, based upon one co-ordinated program, one budget, one control, and a closely unified administration. They contemplated that each of the agencies should apply its best experience and insights in the task of good management, in the recruitment of personnel, and in the development of characteristic programs. There was to be no censoring of the particular aspects of program that derived from the peculiar religious background of the agencies, but the operation of all units so budgeted and administered was to be carried on as a USO project. Responsibility for administering a center did not mean that this center was to be selective in its service to any faith. Each club or center was open to all faiths. Budgets would be determined upon the need to be met, whatever the operating agency designated. There would be no division of funds, as in World War I, on the basis of *agency* needs or programs as such.

Finally, it was considered that the program of service to be required was something too great for any one agency to undertake. Some form of joint undertaking would be preferable. It was on this basis that the early conferences among agency leaders were held. This in itself marked a great change from the previous world-war experience. It was felt, also, that no one organization should undertake alone to deal with government in developing plans for serving military men. No agency cared to become a suppliant of government, seeking right, preference, or favor. Together, these agencies chose to address the government, through its constituted authorities, and proposed as private civilian organizations the wisdom of the policy of service hereafter described. In keeping with the broader faith of democracy, the government of the United States itself,

through its new civilian arm, the Special Services Division, War Department, joined heartily in this new form of partnership. The undertaking is part of the unfolding experience of the American people in the evolution of a democratic social system. It both tests and validates democratic faith.

### *Protestant? Assuredly!*

This, then, was the setting and circumstance in which arose a discussion, even a controversy, that for a time threatened to exceed in seriousness any that had involved Y.M.C.A. relationships with the American Churches of Protestantism in nearly a century of history.

Admittedly, in the account just quoted, the inferences drawn as to the reason for the Y.M.C.A.'s inclusion in the USO relationship, in the views of its own leaders, of the public, and the leaders of government as well, would naturally be that the Y.M.C.A. had important Protestant background, and backing. But beyond this and, perhaps, far more important in the eyes of those immediately concerned, the Y.M.C.A. had had nearly eighty years of experience and admitted competence in serving young men under war conditions and had, in World War I, carried a very substantial share of the total work of this type. Whatever doubt may have lingered on this point in the minds of anybody should have been dispelled by the permission readily granted the Y.M.C.A. on both sides of the conflict on the opening of World War II to undertake again the unique service among Prisoners of War so effectively discharged among six million such prisoners in World War I.

Nor can anyone question the sincerity and general validity of the views expressed in the quoted material on page 122 regarding the significance of USO in interfaith terms, allowing as much as may be proper for the views of Protestant Church leaders, presented later, that the Y.M.C.A.'s participation in USO was not officially approved by the Protestant Church bodies, or strictly representative of them, or otherwise an accepted instrument of their purpose.

If, then, it was wrong for the Y.M.C.A. to admit or accept a Protestant character in terms of the USO compact and the characteristic services born of a century of work among young

men, it would suggest that the very avowal church spokesmen seem to demand was to be questioned if not denied at a time of its most natural and logical assertion. As events later seemed to substantiate, what was really in question was not the substantive issue itself but instead, a matter of strictly representative articulation and "effective clearance." Three years later, in 1945, an authoritative church publication said of the resolving of the "tension,"

. . . The fact that a series of consultations between leaders of the churches and of the Y.M.C.A. soon led to an effective clearance indicates that there is a vital bond of happy union between them.

But the story "telescopes." How were Protestant Church leaders thinking of the USO developments?

### ***How Church Leaders Interpreted Y.M.C.A.-USO Relationships***

For the American Churches, as for the Associations, the years leading up to the beginning of the war, and those that followed, were times of heart-searching. A great sense of responsibility for the religious needs of their constituencies in the home community was matched by their concern for their young men caught up in the holocaust of global war, and standing in sore need of the guidance and comfort of religion. Through the chaplaincy there lay one sure avenue of contact with their youth, but there needed to be some less formal reminder of the resources and backing of religious fellowship as service men had known it at home.

The government's policy of attempting to care for the morale and welfare of service personnel in the camps led officers of the government to appeal frankly to churches and community organizations alike to assist overburdened communities near camps to gird themselves for tremendous efforts. In many smaller communities it was apparent that only by the mobilized resources of the great denominations and, so far as possible, these acting in concert, could they, as in the case of the chaplaincy, provide the ministry needed. This the churches sought to do. On January 3, 1941 the Christian Commission for Camp Communities, was appointed by the Federal Council of Churches, the Home Missions Council, and the General

Commission on Army and Navy Chaplains. On June 12, 1941, only four months after USO itself was organized, conferences between this Commission, Y.M.C.A. executives, and government leaders charged with responsibility for co-ordinating welfare activities for men in the national defense, the commission adopted the following statement:

## RELATION OF THE CHURCHES TO THE USO

### I. THE FACTS IN THE SITUATION

1. In communities in which the Y.M.C.A. has a building of its own it will continue to carry on its program and to sustain such relations with the churches as have hitherto prevailed.

2. In communities which are overburdened with defense responsibilities and in which there are no adequate facilities for recreation and social life, buildings will be leased by the government to the United Service Organizations. Responsibility for managing each building will be allocated to one of the six agencies comprising the USO.

3. The USO building will serve (a) as a center to which men from the camps will go during their free time, (b) as a base for contacts between the churches or other groups in the community and the men from the camps.

4. The churches of the community will carry on their usual programs, expanded for the emergency, in their own buildings. Worship, religious education and personal counselling will naturally have the major place. Opportunity for social fellowship and for contact with normal family life will also be included in the program of the churches.

5. The chief features of the program in the USO buildings will be social fellowship and recreation. The staff will serve as a central clearing-house for the churches and other community groups desiring contacts with the men. The methods of co-operation, including the use of USO buildings by the churches, will depend largely upon the local leadership of the USO staff and of the churches.

6. Dean Luther A. Weigle, President of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, has been elected a member of the Executive Board of the United Service Organizations as a means of helping to keep it in touch with the co-operative work of the churches.



## II. THE POLICY OF THE Y.M.C.A.

The following statement was adopted by the National Board of the Young Men's Christian Associations at its meeting in Cincinnati in May, 1941, defining its policy, as a constituent unit of the United Service Organizations, in relation to the churches:

"RESOLVED That the National Board—

"Recognizing the primary responsibility of the churches for the spiritual care and guidance of men in uniform, and

"Reminding ourselves of the purpose of the Y.M.C.A. to aid in developing Christian personality and in building a Christian society and

"Reaffirming the basic policy of the Y.M.C.A. to be of service to the Christian Church,—

"1) expresses appreciation for the support and help of the churches to the Y.M.C.A. in carrying out its part as one of the United Service Organizations.

"2) affirms as policy for the Y.M.C.A.-operated centers that these buildings be made available, so far as is feasible and according to some orderly plan, to representatives of the churches for religious services and personal contacts with the men.

"3) endorses heartily the appointment of the Christian Commission for Camp Communities and records the desire of the Y.M.C.A., as a Christian organization sharing the concerns of the churches for men in uniform and people in communities affected by defense developments, to work in co-operation with the Commission."

## III. DEFINITIONS OF RELATIONSHIPS

The Christian Commission for Camp Communities, with the approval of the Young Men's Christian Association, issued the following statement as their joint understanding of the relation of the churches and the USO:

"The United Service Organizations for National Defense have undertaken to perform a useful and necessary service for men in uniform and people in communities affected by defense developments. They will provide a wholesome recreational and social program along with friendly personal counselling for these men when they go into the communities adjacent to the military and naval establishments where they are on duty or in training. They will also provide similar services in new communities arising in connection with large defense industries.

"This work will supplement that of the churches much as the same organizations supplement the churches in the average normal community. The churches have the primary responsibility for providing services of worship, the sacraments, the preaching and teaching of the Word of God, and personal pastoral help. Their efforts are largely coordinated through the Christian Commission for Camp Communities. The organizations co-operating in the USO stand ready to assist the churches in their religious program. In some communities these organizations will have staff, equipment and buildings which the churches will lack.

"Arrangements can be made locally for the churches to use Y.M.C.A.-operated USO buildings for meetings, services of worship and office or desk space for representatives of the churches. The national policy of the Y.M.C.A. will encourage extensive co-operation. The executives in charge of USO buildings will regard themselves as responsible for putting service men in touch with local churches.

"Therefore the churches, in addition to their own special responsibility, are urged to give hearty support to the United Service Organizations for National Defense in their campaign for funds and in their work."

---

### ***Co-operation Under War Conditions***

It will be recalled that these agreements, as between the official church bodies and the Y.M.C.A., were made during the "defense" period, and before the active entry of the United States into the war.

There is need here only to trace the principal stages in the developing relationship between the church bodies and the Y.M.C.A., and this must be done very briefly.

1. Much concern began to be expressed by certain churchmen during the early months of 1942, that Protestant Churches, being without official and direct representation in the USO Board of Directors were, at a disadvantage in relation to war-time activities and otherwise as compared with the Catholic and Jewish faiths who had direct participation by official designation.

2. It was reported however that, though certain religious

periodicals were critical of the Y.M.C.A. on this account, a canvass of the denominational publications of twelve leading denominations between January and June 1942, revealed no editorial discussions of Y.M.C.A.-Church relations in relation to USO.\*

3. The National Board Y.M.C.A., in a statement of policy adopted May 16, 1942, which follows, set forth clearly its understanding of its own role and competence for the services it was attempting to render, and its recognition of the place and responsibility of the churches. The statement set forth also certain appointments and relationships by which officially designated church leaders would be directly informed about all USO-Y.M.C.A. developments of concern to them, and thus enable them to enter into co-operative undertakings in keeping with the responsibility of each body.

THE CHURCHES, THE USO, AND THE Y.M.C.A.

Statement on Relationships in Service to Men in the Armed Forces, Adopted by the National Board at its Meeting on May 16, 1942

As one result of a series of consultations between lay officers and executives of the National Council and officers of the Federal Council of Churches, the following statement was made by the Association's representatives and ratified at the May meeting of the National Board:

The Young Men's Christian Association, which had its birth in the evangelical revival of the early nineteenth century and has continued to find its sustaining life in the Protestant churches, has as its traditional policy, service to men, young men, and boys, without regard to race, color or creed. The Y.M.C.A. reaffirms this policy.

In the present emergency the Y.M.C.A. is serving with five other organizations in the USO with the purpose of ministering to the religious, social and recreational needs of the men of our armed services, especially where it is necessary to supplement existing facilities and leadership because of the burdens thrown upon them by new concentrations of men in uniform. In this task the Y.M.C.A. is co-operating to the full with the other organizations in the USO—Catholic, Jewish and Protestant. The Y.M.C.A. believes that this experience of interfaith co-operation has meant much and will

---

\* S. Wirt Wiley. *History of Y.M.C.A.-Church Relations in the United States.* page 173.

mean more in the fight to preserve democracy and increase its significance.

Without in any way limiting this policy, but as an important means of carrying it out, the Y.M.C.A. stands ready to be used by, and desires to act with and for the Protestant churches (to the extent they desire it to do so) in service to the men of the armed forces through the USO.

With a view to making the co-operation between the churches and the Y.M.C.A. in the USO effective on the basis of the foregoing statement, the following procedures have been agreed upon in consultation with the representatives of the Federal Council of Churches and the Christian Commission for Camp and Defense Communities:

1. The National Board of the Young Men's Christian Association, through its officers, invites the Christian Commission on Camp and Defense Communities to nominate representative church leaders whom it will appoint as members of its Army and Navy Committee. (This Committee is responsible for the policy, program, and personnel of the Y.M.C.A. in the USO)

2. Since the field conferences of representatives of the churches, the chaplains, and the USO workers have proved to be so helpful, the National Board of the Y.M.C.A. stands ready to increase the co-operation it has given to the Christian Commission on Camp and Defense Communities in arranging these conferences. It will add to its staff one or more workers who will collaborate with the Commission in maintaining these and other forms of consultation and collaboration.

3. The Army and Navy Committee of the Y.M.C.A. makes the development of close co-operative relations with the churches and chaplains a specific responsibility of each USO-Y.M.C.A. director. As an aid toward making the best practice in this respect the common practice, descriptive manuals of suggestions will be published from time to time. Special attention will be given to such forms of co-operation as the following:

- (a) Definite efforts to relate service men to churches of their own or similar denominations in the community.

- (b) The enlistment of a group of local ministers who may be called upon for personal counseling with soldiers and sailors as the need arises.

4. While Y.M.C.A. boards of management are composed almost entirely of laymen, Y.M.C.A.-operated USO clubs are encouraged to include representative ministers in their boards, and most of them

have done so. Where church federations or ministerial associations exist, they should be asked to nominate those who should represent them on the USO-Y.M.C.A. board. USO-Y.M.C.A. directors will be encouraged to accept membership in church federations or ministerial associations when invited to do so.

5. The Army and Navy Committee of the Y.M.C.A. will gladly collaborate with the Christian Commission in formulating suggestions which may be helpful to USO-Y.M.C.A. workers, officers of church federations and ministerial associations, and other local church leaders and groups in their ministry to men in uniform. In this ministry the Y.M.C.A.:

(a) Recognizes the primary responsibility of the churches for the spiritual care and guidance of the men;

(b) Reiterates its purpose, as a worldwide fellowship of men and boys, to aid in developing Christian personality and in building a Christian society;

(c) Reaffirms the basic policy of the Y.M.C.A. to be of service to the Christian church, and

(d) Recognizes that the Y.M.C.A. and the other agencies in the USO can achieve their purpose of "serving religious, spiritual, welfare, and educational needs of the men" only with guidance and support from the Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish communities of which they are part.

---

4. The designation of a local pastor to serve with the national program director of Y.M.C.A.-USO services in the interest of better church relations and religious emphasis, and the later addition of a number of ministers as religious consultants, were profitable developments in improving both service and relationship.

5. Seminars on personal counseling lead by persons of highest technical competence, of which sixty-one had been held in every part of the country by the end of 1943, had included 1,035 local clergymen, 550 members of USO staffs, 185 chaplains, and 490 social workers—a total of 2,260 persons anxious to improve their capacity to deal helpfully with the personal problems of men and women in the Armed Forces.

6. A rich stream of religious literature, manuals, and program resources, including a Book Shelf much patronized by service personnel greatly enriched the work of USO Clubs, Y.M.C.A.'s, and churches alike.

7. Kindred approaches and services became as effective among workers and their families in war industry communities as among the uniformed services, paving the way for new relationships with labor and industry following the war.

### ***Two Editorials***

From the vantage-point of the editorial office of the Bulletin of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, it will be advantageous to view the resolution of the difficulty that beset Y.M.C.A.-Church relations during the war years. The editorial of May, 1943, was most timely and revealing:

#### **THE CHURCHES, THE Y.M.C.A., AND USO**

Less than a year ago there was widespread confusion with regard to the relation of the Protestant churches and the USO. Dissatisfaction was expressed in many quarters because the Protestant agencies in the USO were not working as closely in co-operation with the churches as the Catholic and Jewish agencies were working with their respective churches. There was criticism of the USO program as having little religious content.

Today the situation is different. There is a well-defined cordial and mutually gratifying understanding between the Y.M.C.A., and the churches. They are working closely together—nationally in the formulation of policy and program, and locally in combining resources for rendering more effective service. The work has an avowed and conspicuous religious emphasis.

The Y.M.C.A. has declared its purpose to act as an agency of the Protestant churches in this ministry insofar as the churches desire it to do so. In conformity with this policy it has appointed official church leaders to its Army and Navy Department, which directs its USO work; it has put clergymen on its staff to promote co-operation between the USO staff and local churches; it has consulted the churches concerning religious literature and other aspects of its program in order "to lend support to the men in retaining their religious ideals and personal integrity." Of the more than nine million items of educational and religious literature which it has printed and distributed, over eight million are of a

religious or inspirational character, including the *Spiritual Almanac* and *Rations* prepared by the Christian Commission for Camp and Defense Communities. A "Religious Book Shelf" for USO Clubs has been provided and also a set of musical records of religious classics.

Many reports indicate an increased confidence and co-operation between the churches and the USO in local communities. Desk space is made available in many clubs for a representative of the churches, and other steps are taken to establish contact between the men and the churches of their choice. Pastors do much of the personal counseling. The local clergy join with the USO staff in seminars on personal counseling set up under leadership secured by the Federal Council's Commission on Religion and Health, thus improving competence and collaboration in meeting the individual needs of the men in the armed forces with whom they come into contact.

These few details are cited as evidence of a development which is highly gratifying to us and which, according to abundant testimony, is proving to be of great religious value to men in service. We suggest that those who are interested in a more complete story write to the Army and Navy Department of the Y.M.C.A., 347 Madison Ave., New York, N. Y., for a free copy of Rev. M. J. Creeger's report of this work.

In a much later editorial, at the close of the war in September, 1945, the broad issue, as seen by church leaders was restated. If there was a "problem," it seemed from this short excerpt, that a solution or "effective clearance" had been found:

When the USO was formed a fresh occasion of tension appeared. The Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A., having had a gratifying record of service in the first World War, assumed, naturally enough, that they should join Catholic and Jewish agencies in working out co-operative arrangements. At the outset, however, there was no consultation with leaders in the Protestant churches. As a result—again, naturally enough—they hardly knew whether Protestantism had any relation to the USO. The confusion which existed for a time is an indication of the "problem" arising from the lack of a well-defined and articulated relationship between the churches and the Associations. On the other hand, the fact that a series of consultations between leaders of the churches and of the Y.M.C.A. soon led to an effective clearance indicates that there is a vital bond of happy union between them.

### *The Issue*

In the editorial last cited, after referring to "confusion" that occasioned "tension," attention was drawn to the "problem arising from the lack of a well-defined and articulated relationship between the churches and the Associations." It was not suggested precisely what that "well-defined and articulated relationship" should be, nor argued that under all circumstances a certain confusion or tension from its lack might not be preferable to a too precise definition and a too snugly articulated relationship when the responsibilities and services of such great social and religious instrumentalities as the churches of American Protestantism and the Young Men's Christian Associations of the United States were concerned. Clearly, this matter needs clarification.

### *The Issue Restated*

Stated sharply, the issues presented by the organization of USO and the Y.M.C.A.'s participation in it were, in present perspective, (1) whether or not the Y.M.C.A. was justified by interest, experience and competence in entering into the six-agency partnership to render religious, social and recreational services to young men in wartime; (2) whether, so participating, the Y.M.C.A. was as shrewd and considerate as it should have been, in consideration of the general expectancy of it by reason of its traditional Protestant orientation, in taking the initiative to provide access and opportunity for the Protestant church bodies to share in shaping USO service policies; and (3) whether the challenge to the Y.M.C.A. by the church leaders signified, beyond their recognized concern for the welfare of service personnel, a fundamental question about the historic independence of the Y.M.C.A., as a movement of lay Christians, from any kind of church control.

It is probable that the first consideration would be readily admitted by all. It is also likely that most Y.M.C.A. leaders to-day would admit that at various points in the early consultations leading to the organization of the USO, there were failures to take full account of the deep interest of the churches in what was being proposed, and in their legitimate stake in any understandings likely to be reached, that would affect wartime com-



munities, and particularly those near camps. As to the third consideration, however, while recognizing every justification and desirability for access and clearance in matters of common concern, even between historic organizations, it may be suggested that the Associations have remained throughout their long history particularly jealous of their lay character and rather deeply concerned to avoid church ties that could be considered formal, or official, or ecclesiastical, or external, or otherwise operative than through the autonomous processes of their own tradition. To many Association leaders, this seems also to be good Protestantism.

But, in whatever terms the issue be stated, there was an issue, and it came to a head. The Y.M.C.A. was challenged, perhaps on justifiable grounds and, with a certain restraint, the Y.M.C.A. responded in a manner that gave satisfaction to the church leaders. Shall it be a lasting satisfaction?

### ***Toward a Lasting Satisfaction***

Certainly Y.M.C.A. leaders, who are also churchmen, hope for the existence and permanence of a kind of relationship between their Movement of Christian laymen, and the churches of Protestantism, that will leave both Associations and churches free to develop all the strength their purposes can sustain, and provide as strong and united an impact upon the life of our times as their combined influence can release through worthy and courageous men.

But here a broader statement of the issue arising from the USO experience appears necessary. The terms and conditions of joint effort vary with times and circumstances. The reasonableness and necessity of the USO wartime partnership of the six founding agencies, while no less desirable in postwar years, has appeared less commanding under new conditions, and its realization now seems less feasible. No prospect was seen, short of a new call to arms or the passage of universal military service, under which an aroused public and adequate finances could be assured. These particular agencies were drawn together not so much by fundamental ideas or affinities, good at any time or for the long future, as by specific competence for a specific job at a specific time. This is hardly the foundation, therefore, upon

which to build a structural alignment with organized Protestantism, on the one hand, or on the other, a tacit identification with the Catholic or other religious bodies of our land. For it now becomes obvious that, in the USO context, Y.M.C.A.-Church relationships were to an appreciable extent overshadowed by the prevailing Protestant-Catholic tension of our time.

Is it not possible that the search for a lasting satisfaction, as between those who carry the burden of Y.M.C.A. service and those who exalt the formal functions of the Church, may be fulfilled sooner through the witness and fellowship of individuals loyal to their common purposes than through structures for representation and clearance?

---

### EIGHTH DIAGNOSIS

The Y.M.C.A.-Church relationships during the USO episode should be evaluated against the whole background of these relationships prior to World War II. So considered, the following considerations move into perspective:

1. *The problem was an old and relatively familiar one projected into a novel situation.* In World War I, most of the same elements of potential understanding had also appeared, and many of the same adjustments had been made. Some of them had been anticipated and given effect at the beginning of that war. In World War II, the churches were not dealing, as in 1917-18, with a virtually free Y.M.C.A., but with an organization already deeply involved with five other national organizations and the federal government in a commitment that appeared, at the outset, to transcend if not preclude a formal representative partnership between the Y.M.C.A. and organized Protestantism. Beyond these wartime relationships, moreover, lay the long unresolved problem of relationship between the churches and Associations in the local community and in the universities under strictly civilian conditions. But for the widely prevailing and long-continued ten-

sions there, it is conceivable that it might have been possible to invent, under war conditions and for wartime communities, as was done to some extent finally, a scheme of practical collaboration less preconditioned by matters extraneous to wartime needs.

2. *The concern of the Protestant Churches to have a direct and worthy part in the war effort, and to be related directly and intimately with their own youth in war service, was both understandable and highly commendable.* No local church, and no group of denominational churches, would wish or could afford to be found wanting at this point. So thinking, it was also natural and commendable for the churches to seek still further effectiveness of appeal for opportunity and access through combining their efforts. Through the Chaplaincy Commission, and the Christian Commission for Camp Communities, substantial relationships were arranged. It does not necessarily appear to follow, however, that question should have been raised regarding the Y.M.C.A., or its USO partnership agreements, unless it was somewhere felt that such relationships with other religious bodies or the government were too strategic, in some wider sense of responsibility or advantage, to be occupied by other than a combined Protestant interest. Undeniably it appears to have been felt that the Y.M.C.A., despite its long identification, was not such an interest. If jealousy had been present, and strategic advantage been the main concern, the Protestant Church forces could scarcely have moved more emphatically to claim what they regarded as their due.

3. *The Y.M.C.A.-Church relationship, as highlighted in USO experience, can best be understood by considering how the relationship during World War II might have developed had there been no USO.* This proposition is not altogether speculative because, as previous sections of this report have

clearly shown, there probably existed, at the advent of the war, sufficient confusion of objectives and lack of co-operative thinking in the local community, as between the organized Protestant bodies and the Y.M.C.A., to have limited if not prevented any substantial desire to express the official church interest through Y.M.C.A. channels. It is altogether conceivable, also, that without the USO compact and the joint service agreements by the agencies, both the Y.M.C.A. and the church interest might have projected their services independently in as many communities as they could organize, man and finance, perhaps without any need to seek government permission or sponsorship beyond that already existing at the beginning of the war or granted the Commissions already named. Had the church interest turned to the Y.M.C.A., however, it is possible that some adjustment like that of World War I or the later co-operative work in World War II, would have been worked out. In either case, it would appear, the USO episode in Y.M.C.A.-Church relationships can be seen most realistically as chiefly a struggle for status, vis-a-vis government and other church bodies, in which the Y.M.C.A. with its long-standing and still unresolved relation to local churches and national church polity, had a relatively incidental place.

4. *There would appear to be no necessary logic between wartime and postwar patterns of relationship among religious and service agencies, or between them and government.* The great mobilizations of war, and their counterpart among the supporting and facilitating services, require in each instance fresh reexamination and readjustment. At the end of 1947, the whole concept of USO became history. The service appeal that brought its agencies into agreement, the strength and effectiveness of their approach to government and the military and the sense of "togetherness" that kept their partnership strong to the end, were not strong enough to continue it by

logic or preference into civilian life or the foreseeable future. There are many things strong agencies like these that made up the USO desire more than mere togetherness. One is independence; and one may be distinctiveness. So in the field of religious organization, it is entirely understandable that the conception of fully-organized Protestantism, or whatever slight aspect of it Y.M.C.A.-Church co-operation in wartime may have represented, should require a fresh evaluation under present conditions. The logic of such innovations or discoveries as were made during war years, will not carry over automatically. The new relationship, freed for the time from the USO frame of reference, must be recreated from current actualities and realities in the local and national community.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

# The Catholic Aspect of Y.M.C.A.-Church Relationships

---

Those who have read thus far will not be surprised, as others might be, to see included at this point a chapter with the above heading. It is made necessary not only by certain facts about the Y.M.C.A. itself, which will first be stated, but by known Catholic attitudes toward the Y.M.C.A., and by evidences of a growing Catholic-Protestant tension in this country at the present time.

### ***Y.M.C.A. Attitudes Toward Catholics***

In earlier chapters it has already been stated that Catholics

1. Constituted 16.6 per cent of the total reported constituency in 1932 (page 17), when they were rather evenly distributed among the population groups, but more largely concentrated in the Eastern and Central states than elsewhere.
2. Represented 24.6 and 28.3 per cent, respectively, of those included in the 1942 and 1947 Constituency Study samples; and 27.5 and 28.0 per cent, respectively, of the samples in these studies from thirty identical Associations participating in both studies (page 20); and amounted to substantially larger proportions in individual cities of Eastern and Central states, sometimes in excess of 50 per cent.
3. Comprised 3.0 per cent of the board members reported by 709 Associations in 1940, with almost no change by early 1948 (page 24); and with a strikingly even distribution by population group and region (page 26).

4. Entered professional service as secretaries in a proportion never exceeding 2 per cent, under national organization controls operative since 1930, but latterly somewhat relaxed (pages 34 to 36).

Facts like the foregoing, indicate that Y.M.C.A. attitudes toward Catholic young men are far from inhospitable. Such facts are best understood in the context of preceding expositions where, it is made abundantly clear, the long-standing "open-door" policy of the Associations in making their services available to the local community and the community's reciprocating attitudes of expectancy and support, have made such participation wholly natural.

It is clear that in many communities such Y.M.C.A. participation by Catholic young people has not been looked upon with favor by the clerical leaders of the Catholic faith. Some further information on this point will be offered later in this chapter. Before doing so, however, it will be informing and perhaps rewarding to consider somewhat more in detail the experience of Associations in certain communities having large Catholic populations and some of the situations currently arising in Y.M.C.A. administration.

#### SOME LOCAL EXPERIENCES

During 1945 visits were made to certain cities by members of a special Study Committee on the Relation of Church Affiliation to Continuity and Growth of Members. Reports for five of such visits are summarized here. Three larger cities, one medium-sized, and one smaller city are referred to. All are in the East. The three larger cities will be designated as follows: City L (Y.M.C.A. members 38.5 per cent Catholic); City N (members 35.2 per cent Catholic); City P (members 45.4 per cent Catholic). The medium-sized city is City M (members 43.2 per cent Catholic). The smallest, City O, had 29.9 per cent of its membership Catholic.

##### *A. Constituency*

The Catholic proportion of the Y.M.C.A. membership in these cities was generally increasing, though not always in relation to population change. (Jewish membership was re-

ported as increased in City L and City P). In City M, the proportion of Catholic members was well below the community level. In all except City M, the proportion of Catholics remaining in the membership one year or less was substantially above that for Protestants. The number of Catholic members surviving in the membership ten years or more, in proportion to Protestant survivals, were as 1:2 in City L, 1:4 in City O; 1:5 in City P; 1:7 in City M; and 1:8 in City N.

In City M it was believed that "religious affiliation has no relation to continuity at all," though the Constituency Study data seemed to indicate otherwise. In City O, the difference from the 1942 Constituency Study showing less survival among non-Protestants was not admitted as fact by the executive. He contended "that the Catholic group is a more recent addition and given as long an opportunity, they will reveal a good record of continuity." However, it was felt in City L that the tenure of Protestant members is definitely greater than that of other religions.

It was reported that induction interview procedures, except where non-existent or inoperative under war conditions, were not affected by difference of religious affiliation.

### *B. Leadership and Responsibility*

Among these Associations, City O was outstanding in the proportion of members so developing as to occupy committee, group leader or officer relationships. There, 28.9 per cent of its Protestant members, and 21.1 per cent of its Catholic members, were so designated. In City N, by contrast, where 21.8 per cent of the Protestant members were reported to be in such positions, only 4.8 per cent of the Catholics were so related.

### *C. Program*

In the three largest cities, a substantially larger proportion of Catholics than Protestants was related to the activity of only a single department or feature of the Association program. In the two smaller cities the proportions of Protestants and Catholics so related were substantially equal.

In City N, religious activities as such were "largely out, so far as Catholic members were concerned." Catholic boys did not



share in camp worship and were excused to attend nearby Mass. "Some non-Protestant Hi-Y members will lead devotional periods, but others oppose their inclusion in the program." In City M, local leaders saw no effect in their work from differences of religious affiliation. The reporter was "a little nonplussed by unawareness (or) recognition of any unconscious limitation in the religious nature of the program."

In City L it was felt that "the religious activities of Hi-Y and young men's clubs are definitely modified by the presence of other religious groups." Two sets of values confronted the Association: "Definite religious instruction and training is modified by the mixture of religious and cultures" and on the other hand "basic understandings between religious groups and cultures are going on," which is essential "if America is to remain a unity and achieve democracy." There also the interest of Catholic (and Jewish) boys centered more in physical department interest where there was no variation of activities based on religious considerations or readiness. "For more intimate and personal group programs, e. g. weekend parties or camping trips," provision was made for two worship services rather than one.

In City O little evidence was reported that religious activities were "toned down" but much uncertainty was noted as to which activities should be so designated. No Bible study groups or Sunday meetings were being held. Increasing relationship with social agencies, it was thought, might be largely responsible for lack of Protestant orientation. In City P, the increase of Catholic members, who were said to be largely Italians, "affects their group work in that Protestant church young people do not participate in activities so largely dominated by a Catholic group." However, respect shown by Catholic members toward the Y.M.C.A.'s Protestant tradition was noted.

In City P where doubt was expressed that progress to wider interests or more responsible relationships was as much effected by religious affiliation as by "nationality" and "cultural barriers," though these can hardly be separated from religious background. In City L (where it was said that "the Jewish member is very definitely a single activity member") there

seemed to be no discernible difference in the number of activities participated in by Catholics and Protestants. The response to religious activities was greater on the part of the latter, but no difference was discernable in the quality of committee service for most activities. It was observed that "where secretaries are almost entirely Protestant," it is inevitable that "these leaders tend to have more confidence in Protestants for such positions than other religious faiths."

In City O there was no "key" group as such but the Board of 25 members included three Roman Catholics, and the Mayor of the city, an able leader and a Catholic, was the president of the Y.M.C.A. In City P, though "key" policy-making groups were predominantly Protestant, ("largely as a result of former membership regulations and partly because of their church experience and the fact that the Protestant is more likely to have a better education"), an attempt had been made to include Catholic representation in various committees "though their participation is less than their percentage of membership."

In City L it was observed "that the Protestant member develops and maintains a greater interest in matters having to do with the conducting and perpetuating of the Association as an agency of service." In City M, however, they believed that no one is "particularly conscious of his religious affiliation in Board and committee work." In City O, member expression in policy-making groups and committees were said to be limited, while Board leaders, including those who are Catholic, were not only prominent in local and state-wide Y.M.C.A. activities but "are influential in both Catholic and community affairs" and "splendid allies" of the Y.M.C.A.

The reporter for City N cited an earlier unhappy experience with certain Catholic Board members and a feeling that "Catholic respect seems to be more largely won by a frankly Protestant viewpoint than by an effort to be religiously more neutral and inclusive." Protestant and Jewish members showed greater continuity of interest. In a certain branch, however, there was much greater participation by Catholics in management and program. The reporter noted an apparent "lack of able Christian laymen" from Y.M.C.A. experience available to the Protestant churches and slight participation by members of any kind

in democratic controls notwithstanding the objective of "a Christian educational enterprise."

#### *D. Finance*

An important question was as to the effect upon financial operations of religious affiliation of constituents, and whether financial support had been withheld on this account. City L reported that Y.M.C.A. financial resources had been definitely limited because of the large and dominating position of the Catholic church; and had had a few cases "where conservative Protestants" refused to support because of large Catholic (and Jewish) membership. Cities N and O were reported as having had very little financial support from Catholics.

Detailed experiences were reported as to community fund relationships in Cities M and O. In one, now yielding substantial support, inadequate support had been provided through a Chest setup said to be dominated by non-Protestant influence. In the other case substantial gains in financing were reported from industry and through the community fund, concerning which a Protestant minister believed "that were the Y.M.C.A. to become more definitely Protestant in affiliation and character, it might lose some Chest support." Whereas the Jewish group was reported as outstanding in its support of Association work in City P the Association "is now seeking closer co-operation and better understanding with labor" which itself might involve some change in relation with Catholic support by reason of its constituency being almost 50 per cent Catholic at present with a predominance of young Italians in its group program.

#### SOME COMPLICATIONS

*Case 1:* In a smaller city of a western state, a group of citizens held a community meeting in the hall of a Catholic church in the interest of organizing a Y.M.C.A. All organized groups of the community attended: churches, service groups, labor organizations, lodges, and women's organizations. Their representatives attended in response to an invitation by a sponsoring committee on which were both Protestants and Catholics, including one priest and two Protestant ministers. A field representative of the Y.M.C.A. attended and spoke at this meeting ex-

plaining, according to a lay officer, the "non-sectarian" nature of the Y.M.C.A. and that the management was wholly in the hands of the local Board of Directors. The formation of a Y.M.C.A. was then authorized by the meeting, and 15 representatives were elected as its first Board. A nominating committee (4 Protestants, one a minister, and 2 Catholics, one a priest) submitted a slate of 15 names, and other nominations were made from the floor. By secret ballot a board composed of the following was elected: two Presbyterians, three Methodists, three Christians (Disciples), one United Brethren, two Baptists, one Protestant (unspecified), and three Catholics. No ministers or priests were included. Occupationally, the group was diversified, and some members could be called eminent. Seven were war veterans, five of them of the late war.

Deeply believing that a Y.M.C.A. so organized would "do more than any other agency to unite all our people in Christian effort," as one layman put it, the Board met at intervals over several months, studied the Constitution of the National Council, and adopted a constitution of their own which they regarded in conformity with that of the National Council. They set up their organization, called an able secretary, started a program, and applied for an official Charter. At this point a difficulty appeared for at some point a clause had been added to their statement of purpose forbidding certain types of activity. The amended Article was as follows:

The purpose of this Association shall be to help young people to develop Christian character and to aid them in building a Christian society by the maintenance of such facilities, activities and services as contribute to the accomplishment of this purpose. *This Association shall not directly or indirectly sponsor religious education.*

It was given as the view of the local Board that the last statement was added to clarify a local situation, and that it "means that there will not be any doctrines or sectarian principles taught (no organized Sunday School groups, etc.) and that proselytism will never be practiced in any way." In the Board's view, the entire constitution conformed with the national requirements for securing a Charter, "unless the strictest con-

struction is given to the words" italicized. However, the official body of the National Council responsible for approving the list of "duly organized Associations" withheld its approval pending elimination of the prohibitory provision. Later, however, the local board proposed to insert the word "sectarian" before the word "religious" in the final clause, and the National Council body gave its word that if and when this was done, the Association would be recognized.

*Case 2:* In a Western city of about 15,000, an Association organized in 1906 and reported as continuously active up to 1943 has since been reported as inactive. A Y.M.C.A. organization still exists however, and holds title to a modest building. In this building, and with the apparent approval of the Y.M.C.A. holding-group, may be found an active young people's program operating under a Youth Center Board and executive who say "we do not have a Y.M.C.A. here." There is known Catholic pressure in that community, but also some other opposition from one or more prominent persons. Some of the existing Board feel that the present set-up is in reality a Y.M.C.A.; and there are some persons who would like to see the national qualifications for the recognition of Associations so construed as to admit them as they are to good standing, hoping that by so doing it may be possible to bring them farther and farther into Y.M.C.A. relationships. This has not yet been done.

*Case 3:* In an Eastern city of 25,000, an Association organized long ago which had carried on a program similar to that in other small communities, sent a communication early in 1947 to the National Council saying that it desired to "resign" from the National Council. The Association owned a building costing considerably more than \$100,000 and, at the time, was operating on a budget under \$10,000. While subsequent communications stated that unwillingness to pay "national dues" was the ostensible reason, inquiry disclosed that lack of sympathy with the Protestant objectives and methods of the Y.M.C.A. was possibly a factor. Meantime a popular youth leader of Catholic background was made the operating executive of such program as was made available. Under the laws of this state, at the time, there did not exist any legal authority by which the Y.M.C.A. could intervene or prevent this transition

from a Y.M.C.A. status to a club or society under purely local auspices. To a well-informed State Council of Churches representative, the situation described arose because the Protestant churches of the community had not "kept close" to the Y.M.C.A.

The foregoing cases are, of course, not typical of the situation in the many hundreds of other smaller communities, or larger ones, except as they reveal elements that are found in many Associations. However, it should be recognized that these elements may under certain circumstances lead to "complications." For example, in an Association in a city of 150,000 firm in the Protestant Evangelical tradition since its founding in 1858, its constitutional statement of purpose unchanged since its adoption of "the Portland Test" long ago, why is it that the Board now seeks to restate its objectives, reshape its policy-making structure, and liberalize its qualifications for Board membership by allowing for the designation of Catholic representatives? And how reasonable is it, when the Hi-Y clubs in the high schools of a very large city admit boys who are Catholic and Jewish as well as Protestant, for a leading Church Council spokesman to say:

There are also areas of misunderstanding and unsolved relationships, i. e., Hi-Y Clubs as over against programs of religious education in the high schools. Many people feel that the "Y" has lost the Christian emphasis. As the "Y" reaches out to the Jews and Catholics, it is more or less losing the actual *Christian* emphasis.

### ***Catholic Attitude Toward the Y.M.C.A.***

We choose to speak here not of the *attitudes of Catholics* toward the Y.M.C.A., for the substantial number of Catholic members speaks of that, but of the *Catholic attitude* toward the Y.M.C.A., so far as that may be known or inferred from evidence at hand.

It is frequently assumed that the attitude of the Catholic Church in the United States toward the Y.M.C.A. is one of vigorous opposition. While there may be considerable truth in such a statement, it is one that should be qualified in certain respects in the interest of more accurate appraisal of the current position.

There is ample evidence of different tacit attitudes on the

part of different Catholic priests and bishops toward the Y.M.C.A. Published statements by members of the Catholic clergy also differ in their temper and in their interpretation. We quote from three.

Much is sometimes made in Catholic publications of "restrictions" faced by Catholics in the matter of voting and office-holding. Many Association leaders would assume that the National Council action of 1933 (See page 30) permitted sufficient latitude to local Associations to remove such restriction wherever it was desired to do so. It is probable that this fact is not everywhere known. A relatively recent Catholic publication cited the constitution of a strong local Association (which provides for active or voting membership upon either 1) membership in an evangelical church or 2) acceptance of the personal statement of faith and purpose adopted by the 1925 International Convention), as follows:

. . . The constitution, it is true, does not say that one must fulfill both conditions 1) and 2) in order to be an active member. But who does not see that if a Catholic subscribes to requirement 2), he has already embraced the principle of religious indifference and has surrendered the truth that the Church is the only qualified guide and teacher of faith and morals? \*

. . . A Catholic as a non-evangelical may not be a voting or office-holding member of the Y.M.C.A. As a Catholic he may not become such a member by subscribing to the "purpose." Hence he may not be an *active* but only an *associate* member, that is, an inferior member. But what Catholic, who belongs to an organization almost two thousand years old, and whose ancestors gladly died for the faith, will trample under foot his dignity, and for the sake of bodily comforts become a secondary member of a Protestant organization? \*\*

It thus appears that in principle and in fact the position of the Catholic Church, insofar as such a publication may be presumed to represent it, would be against membership in any Association that asked applicants to sign a personal statement of

---

\* *Modern Questions*—In the Light of Christian Principles and the Teaching of the Papal Encyclicals, a discussion club manual for Young People's Groups, by Rev. Rudolph G. Bandas. Our Sunday Visitor Press. Huntington, Indiana. 76 pages. 1944.

\*\* *Ibid.*, page 71.

faith such as that approved by the Washington Convention in 1925, which is:

I am in full accord with the following purpose of the Young Men's Christian Association of the United States and Canada and commit myself to its voluntary service and support:

PURPOSE OF THE YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

To lead young men to faith in God through Jesus Christ; to promote their growth into fullness of Christian character; to lead them into active membership in the church of their choice; and to make the extension of the Kingdom of God throughout the world the governing purpose of their lives.

However, this writer goes even further:

. . . A Catholic who becomes a full-fledged member of the Y has already in principle accepted the doctrine that one religion is as good as another. And since modern non-Catholic religions have abandoned the essentials of divine revelation, a Catholic who moves in this evangelical atmosphere of religious indifferentism will soon lapse into naturalism and religious indifference.

It is our firm opinion that no Catholic may serve as an officer in the Y. If the officers promote all the activities of the Association, therefore all its religious work, the Catholic would be promoting the spread of heresy and would himself become suspect of heresy. May a Catholic be in charge at least of the social and athletic activities? We do not think so. Social and athletic activities easily lead Catholics to participate in the Y's religious work. Secondly, the presence of a prominent Catholic on the local Board of Directors, the presence of popular and outstanding Catholic young men on the board of the Hi-Y, will influence their co-religionists—especially unwary Catholics—who will be blinded to the real situation and moved to join an organization which is not without danger to their faith.

It is also our opinion that no Catholic may pay regular dues to the Y, for by his contribution he is supporting all the activities which the Y conducts. But what sincere Catholic would in conscience lend his support to the Y's anti-Catholic propaganda in Latin America and in the Catholic countries of Europe?

Many Catholics claim that by their membership they are seeking merely the athletic and recreational facilities offered by



the Y. Catholics should remember, however, that for no temporal or bodily advantage whatsoever should they compromise their high dignity as members of the mystical Body of Christ. . .

This conception was later elaborated in another Catholic organ:

In order to promote their cause among Catholic Youth, some non-Catholic organizations such as the Y.M.C.A. assure us that they are not inimical to the Catholic Faith. If, by the word "inimical" they mean that they do not publicly and expressly denounce the Catholic Church they may be right. However, we are primarily interested in the preservation of the Faith in our children, and are well aware that there are many other ways of endangering our Faith besides public attack. The very indifference to all religion or the implication that all religions are equally good, is a grave danger to the True Faith. There can be only One True Faith—and it is ours. And every insinuation to the contrary, be it in the form of another religion, a social society, or a youth organization must be considered a danger to the Faith. It was not without reason that the Holy Office—the highest tribunal in the Church created to guard and protect the Faith—has warned all Catholics against membership in the Y.M.C.A. The Church does not condemn the "Y" as an organization. The Holy Office praised the good work of the "Y" in its own field. For non-Catholic youth it can and should do much to prevent crime and to foster Christian charity and justice. But since its basis is the Protestant faith, upon which its supreme rulers insist, a Catholic may have no part in it. The Holy Office objected not to its good work, but to its "proselytising" activity—its effort to gain members from among Catholics for its definite Protestant organization.

The intolerance of the Catholic Church toward error, the natural position of one who is the custodian of truth and her only reasonable attitude, makes her forbid her children to affiliate directly or indirectly with religious denominations holding contrary principles. This places the Catholic in a position where he must stand aloof from all manner of doctrinal teaching other than that delivered by the Church. And whatever the Y.M.C.A. or other outsiders may think of the correctness of his belief and religious principles, they cannot have two opinions as to the logic and consistency of the stand he takes. Remember, consistency in religious matters is too rare

a commodity nowadays to be made light of. The Y.M.C.A. should understand that for the Catholic this is a matter of principle and not of personalities. If it is faithful to its own principles and understands the Catholic's point of view, it must not be surprised or chagrined to find that Catholics do not and may not imitate its own so-called liberality of religion. If it is honest, it will not urge or even expect them to affiliate themselves with religious clubs of its particular belief.

Many recent publications from non-Protestant sources indicate the margin within which co-operation between the Y.M.C.A. as a traditionally Protestant organization and the Catholic communion are conceived to be permissible. In one of these documents\* is contained the following statement, consisting of two parts: "Intercredal Co-operation in the Papal Documents," and "Principles." After a careful review of Encyclicals from Leo XIII to Pius XII, the writers consider it clear that the Popes "have stated with increasing emphasis that it is the duty of Catholics to initiate a new type of co-operative relationship with non-Catholics. . ."

[The] field of co-operation is already fairly clear from the declarations of the Popes themselves. . . . It has been accepted as a Christian truth that mankind pursues its activities in two distinct spheres, each with its own proper autonomy, which roughly correspond, as St. Augustine pointed out, to the body and soul. The final cause of the first is man's temporal happiness, and of the second his eternal happiness; and while the first is subordinated to the second, yet mankind pursues its temporal happiness as an end, provided this does not interfere with the eternal salvation of souls. Each individual person, of course, must use temporal things as a means to his eternal salvation, while civil society, as such, has them as ends. This temporal happiness of man is what we usually term social welfare, the temporal well-being of society as such, and the proper sharing by all men of the goods of the earth. . . . It is the restoration of this welfare which is the objective of the social Encyclicals [which] deal specifically with the temporal life of man.

Now it is a characteristic of man's temporal happiness that it can be achieved only by the co-operation of all the elements of society,

---

\* *Intercredal Co-operation*, Catholic Association for International Peace, Washington, D. C., 1943, page 18 ff.

whatever be their religious profession. . . . It should be sufficiently clear that the kind of financial and industrial reconstruction they preach cannot be brought by Catholics alone, for we are everywhere a minority among the forces that bear responsibility for such things. . . . A more important and difficult task is to define the basis on which this co-operation is to be conducted.

It might be, for instance, that we are expected to work for the regeneration of society solely in the purely secular groups that operate, at least partially, to this end. Catholics are members of the Democratic party, the AF of L, the CIO, and other labor groupings, the Boy Scouts, the Girl Scouts, and other youth organizations, various national societies for economics, sociology, and politics; they work on newspapers and national magazines. In these capacities they are often able to make their Catholic principles acceptable to their non-Catholic fellows, and thus secure their co-operation in this sense. Is this all that the Popes have in mind in their commands to us? I do not think so. And the reason is that they uniformly put the collaboration which they demand on a religious basis, while the motivation of all the groupings I have listed is purely secular. . . . But the renovation of secular society is not the whole Catholic program, nor even the principal part of it. The paramount interest is the religious adherence of all men, through faith and love, to the supernatural unity of the Church of Christ, which is the Church in communion with the successor of Peter. . . . The full teaching of the Church, even as shown forth in all the Encyclicals, really proposes two distinct and successive steps that have to be taken before society can be really organized on the basis of a full and integral Christianity. . . . What the Popes have been telling us all these years is that it is our duty to prepare for the coming of the religious union of mankind by first bringing about a union of wills on the natural plane. . . . In any case, the Popes have commanded us to unite with non-Catholics on this secular field.

. . . There is, therefore, a cardinal distinction that must be firmly maintained in this whole question. An "interdenominational Christianity" that sets itself up as a religious system, supposedly deriving from Christ and supposedly sufficient for eternal salvation, is one thing; quite a different thing is an interconfessional agreement on certain necessary religious and moral bases of a just social order within the earthly city. . . . Common agreement between men of different faiths on the religious and moral principles that are directive of the social order is, in controlled circumstances, entirely legitimate. . . .

. . . In the practical order, the organization of an intercredal effort toward world reconstruction presents a real problem. . . . This work is the creation of a new complex of ethical currents in society, and their incorporation in a new set of social institutions, in order that both together may support, instead of crushing, the moral conscience as well as the temporal happiness of mankind. . .

. . . A more difficult question concerns not so much the fact as the mode of organization. . . . There are two principles available for its solution. Co-operation might be organized on the principle of fusion, that is, mixed membership, Catholic and non-Catholic, in a single association. In the case of the Christian trade unions in Germany at the beginning of the century, this principle was, under certain safeguards, "tolerated and permitted." But its use seems hardly possible or prudent in the American scene at the moment. The other organizing principle is that of federation, that is, distinct Catholic and non-Catholic organizations united by a joint committee of mixed membership. In England today co-operation is, in general, organized on the principle of federation—the Sword of the Spirit is joined to Religion and Life by a Joint Standing Committee; and there seems to be mutual satisfaction with the formula evolved: "Parallel action in the religious sphere, joint action in the social and international field." In this mode of organization, the co-operation, in the strict sense, would be largely committed to the members of the joint committee, who would be persons of particular qualifications.

. . . The real, fundamental difficulty, to my mind, lies in the relative absence from the average American Catholic mind of what must be the dynamic of the whole idea—a profoundly felt and energetically operative concern over today's spiritual crisis in the temporal order. The crisis itself is there, perhaps more darkly menacing in America than elsewhere because its menace is so inadequately realized. Concern over it certainly exists in the heart of the Church and has been voiced in anguished fashion by our last two Popes. But until this concern is somehow thrust into the center of our consciousness and sharpened to the point of poignancy (for which perhaps tragic events are needed), discussion of intercredal co-operation—a problem allied to today's spiritual crisis—will command only academic interest, or perhaps be regarded as annoying.

From this last quotation defining the proper bounds and scope of "intercredal co-operation," as Catholic authority sees it, may be inferred the basis of thinking that, presumably, leads certain Catholic clergy to permit young people and others under their

surveillance to engage in Y.M.C.A. activities, notwithstanding sharp instructions to the contrary from other church authorities.

There have been instances, some of them documented, where Catholic laymen, after a period of activity and leadership in Y.M.C.A. service, have abruptly withdrawn by order of superior authority. It would be understandable, also, if some who remained did so with the intention so to shape and qualify the nature of the Association's program as to avoid objectionable aspects, and thus rid it altogether of any conceivable basis for the recurrent but nevertheless false charge of "proselytism." And it is also believed, not without considerable evidence, that some persons of Catholic background prefer to risk official displeasure, than to lose for themselves or their children the Christian contacts, benefits, and values they find in the Y.M.C.A.

It thus appears that the general Catholic attitude toward the Y.M.C.A. in the United States today challenges its contacts and service among non-Protestant Christians, regardless of demand; questions the Y.M.C.A. "atmosphere" and program as lending implicitly if not explicitly to "proselytism"; denies to the Association any function of "religious education," except perhaps among non-Catholics; allows contacts and co-operative undertakings and services toward "secular" ends; and countenances tactical procedures within the Y.M.C.A. and otherwise designed to support these objectives.

### *The Wider Context*

No one needs to be reminded that the Roman Catholic Church is a worldwide organization. Few who read this report will need to be told, either, that the Young Men's Christian Association is also worldwide, and that it is at work today in all continents and in at least sixty-eight countries.

It has been preferable, even essential, in the foregoing discussion to confine the implications and citations to the United States. We have even presumed to make no references whatever to the different circumstances that characterize Y.M.C.A. relations with all churches and with the Catholic Church in this country's nearest neighbor to the north. Yet it would be a serious omission to fail to note that in many if not most of the

lands in which it operates, the Y.M.C.A. is and must remain definitely aware of the presence and program of the Roman Catholic Church. This does not necessarily imply opposition. But opposition there has often been.

It obviously lies beyond the scope of this report to deal directly with this relationship in so many different countries, or to attempt to do so for any of them. Yet the reader should not forget that in some lands that are overwhelmingly Catholic in population, the Y.M.C.A. has had a long history and remarkable development. Sometimes this has been against opposition both constant and severe. Sometimes it has meant almost exclusive identification with defiant Protestant minorities. Not infrequently Y.M.C.A. development has had the tacit if not active approval of Roman church authorities, or at least much less open opposition than had become commonplace elsewhere.

It has been true since Myron Clark sailed for Brazil in 1893, that North American Y.M.C.A.'s have had a mission in Latin America not, as a reference quoted previously (page 150) has stated, to carry on "the Y's anti-Catholic propaganda in Latin America," but to make available to leaders of those lands of whatever faith, including great numbers of more or less nominal Catholics whatever the Y.M.C.A. can offer about Christian living, character and citizenship, education, and worthy social co-operation in related fields.

The mission of the Y.M.C.A. in these lands has always been the same, whether among Moslems and Hindus, among Confucians and Buddhists, among the warring peoples of the Holy Land, or the different bodies of Christendom in the Middle East and Eastern Europe, or Latin America, or elsewhere.

If the obligations of an organization like the Y.M.C.A. arise out of the need and expectancy of peoples rather than by the concurrence of authority, be it governmental, cultural, or religious, then it may be readily understood why the Y.M.C.A.'s sense of obligation and mission as an international Christian society of laymen and youth has expanded and continues to expand without limit from class, race, country or creed.

When the World's Committee of Y.M.C.A.'s held its first major post-war meeting at Edinburgh in August, 1947 representatives were present from the following lands:

*From Affiliated Alliances:*

Australia  
 Belgium  
 Brazil  
 Canada  
 China  
 Czechoslovakia  
 Denmark  
 England, Wales and Ireland  
 Finland  
 France  
 Germany  
 Hungary  
 India, Burma and Ceylon  
 Italy  
 Japan  
 Korea  
 Netherlands  
 New Zealand  
 Norway  
 Philippines  
 Portugal  
 Scotland  
 South American Federation  
 Sweden  
 Switzerland  
 Union of South Africa  
 United States of America

*Observers from Non-affiliated  
Movements:*

Austria  
 Egypt  
 Greece  
 Indochina  
 Indonesia  
 Lebanon  
 Madagascar  
 Mexico  
 Nigeria  
 Palestine  
 Poland  
 Siam  
 Sierra Leone  
 Straits Settlements  
 West Africa  
 Russian Service in France  
 Displaced Persons

The program of the meeting itself dealt with subjects whose significance in the postwar world was matched only by the importance of the "Agenda for Advance" adopted by the body to guide the worldwide strategy ahead. The topics of this "Agenda" were

- I. World Fellowship in Being
- II. The World-wide Visitation and Study
- III. The Christian Message and the Needs of Youth
- IV. Mobilizing Youth in the Y.M.C.A.
- V. Our International and Interracial Responsibility
- VI. Our Relations with Christian and Other Organizations
- VII. A Christian World Strategy for Restoration and Advance

## VIII. The Expanding Responsibility of the World's Committee

## IX. Business Sessions

## X. Summary and Implications

Under the sixth heading, "Our Relations with Christian and Other Organizations," one finds the following:

## RELATIONS WITH ROMAN CATHOLICS

The Y.M.C.A. is established<sup>a</sup> in 18 predominantly Roman Catholic countries. The relative number of Catholics and Protestants among members and among leaders and committeemen varies greatly; there are places where the leadership is entirely Protestant while in others it is entirely or predominantly Catholic. The attitudes toward the Y.M.C.A. of the church officials and of Catholic laymen, and similarly the attitude of Protestants, vary considerably. On the whole the services rendered by the Y.M.C.A. during the war have created many opportunities for useful co-operation and have shown to many of both confessions the great value of the Y.M.C.A. as a lay inter-confessional organization.

The increased proportion of Roman Catholics in the Y.M.C.A. Movement and their sharing of Association purposes, responsibilities and prerogatives, leads to consideration of ways in which the World's Committee may fully express its ecumenical or inter-confessional principles by making it possible for the Roman Catholic members of the Y.M.C.A. to enjoy, in Association conferences and camps, their customary form of worship and spiritual edification, and thus a sense of parity in participation and responsibility in Association affairs.

Reportedly, it was not without deep-running discussion and much searching of heart that this most responsible body of worldwide Y.M.C.A. unity and strategy reached this conclusion. It is too soon, as yet, to have considered adequately the bearing of this general statement of policy upon the circumstances and policies of the Y.M.C.A.'s of the United States, who, of course, have full autonomy in their administration. The "Agenda" statement refers to variations between the several lands and their Y.M.C.A. Movements both in Association practices, in the attitude of the Catholic Church, and in the current cultural and religious setting. This latter is of special concern in the United States at the present time.



***The Growing Catholic-Protestant Tension in the United States***

The tension between the Protestant Churches of the United States and the Roman Catholic Church has apparently reached unprecedented dimensions. For the past three or four years, this discussion has occupied major attention in certain parts of the religious press. Great public meetings have been called in the Protestant interest to challenge openly the presumptions and predominance of Catholicism in certain phases of American life. Distinguished church leaders on both sides have engaged in acrimonious public controversy. The highest official bodies of these great Christian Churches have become involved. What shall laymen think?

The mounting tension is based not only or principally upon the give and take of mere discussion. Instead, many feel that the historic tolerance within which Protestant and Catholic antecedents alike have had opportunity to propagate their truth and extend their systems may be approaching a crisis; and that the historic framework of religious liberty by which, in this land, Church and State have lived in complementary and distinctive relationship may become endangered.

In a series of notable decisions on cases appealed from lower courts, the United States Supreme Court, in view of some, has altered the historic doctrine of the separation of Church and State, especially in the decisions relating to public school bus transportation for parochial school students, and the recent Champaign case denying the possibility of released time religious education under provisions such as those established by Illinois law. In the same manner, proposals for Federal aid to education, a measure long sought to equalize public educational opportunity, and to strengthen the democratic values of public education through a national policy of grants-in-aid, have been allegedly jeopardized through Catholic efforts to secure these same advantages for parochial education as well. Certain other widely publicized instances alleging diversion of public funds to sectarian religious ends have aroused many churchmen and citizens.

It is unnecessary for present purposes to elaborate these details further. Suffice it to say that it is a time when an atmosphere of calmness and restraint, not always apparent latterly, is

needed on the part of Y.M.C.A. policy-makers and all alert citizens. But also needed is a more fundamental grasp than many seem to have of the fundamental philosophy of democratic government and a free society in order that we may not, inadvertently, let disappear from our cultural heritage guarantees that could and might easily be undermined or lost by reason of those, however religiously motivated, who work politically toward "sectarian" ends.

Whether the way forward is to create a "resistance" movement, as the recently formed "Protestants and other Americans United for Separation of Church and State," seems to suggest, or to work through "peaceful" means toward better understanding, is not altogether clear. Y.M.C.A.'s, both because of their composition as well as their tradition, their non-ecclesiastical, lay outlook as well as their church-loyal orientation, and their worldwide, relationship and their involvement as a part of the local and national community, can hardly escape the responsibility of throwing their influence toward some worthy bridging of a deepening cleavage that cannot be reconciled by controversy or healed by default.

### ***Toward Understanding***

Any efforts the Y.M.C.A. may make toward improved Protestant-Catholic understanding should start, one assumes, with clearer and more courageous thinking and action upon that which is nearest at hand—that is, its own problem of relationships with these great branches of the Christian faith. Clues are needed.

In this and preceding chapters, enough has been said to indicate the difficulty of such a proposal, as well as the danger of drift or delay.

In American life today not many patterns of relationship that specifically seek improved Catholic-Protestant understanding are observable. Let us list them briefly:

1. Undertakings that seek a challenging and counterpoising of opposing interests, of which an example would seem to be the newly formed "Protestants and Other Americans United for Separation of Church and State," a private voluntary organization initiated by prominent Protestant churchmen.

2. Undertakings that seek common identification and action on some subject of great public urgency, by means of a special joint committee, well illustrated by the collaboration of authorized Protestant, Catholic and Jewish representatives resulting in certain war-time pronouncements such as the "Six Pillars of Peace."

3. Undertakings that bring together influential leaders of the three faiths in a more or less permanent consultative relationship, such as the Interfaith Goodwill Committee of Rochester, formed in 1934, which includes the Catholic Bishop and other diocesan officers, three Jewish Rabbis, four Protestant ministers, and certain laymen. The objectives of this committee, stated in part, are as follows:

The Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish Communions in this city, through official representatives, have organized a permanent body known as the Inter-Faith Goodwill Committee to express their sense of comradeship and to consider such issues as may arise which are of common concern.

The confusion of the time offers to the members of these communions an opportunity to achieve a deeper understanding and appreciation of one another. It also challenges them to emphasize in their moral and religious outlook the great common principles which they believe to be the basis of our civilization.

The members of these communions, for instance, share the belief in the spiritual nature of man and in man's supreme responsibility to God. They are also united in the desire to maintain the rights of men, civil and religious, which are the foundation pillars of the Republic, and which are guaranteed to our citizens by the Constitution.

We welcome the public discussion of every question of common concern. We recognize that there are times when the public discussion of religious as well as political differences may be a necessity if our democracy is to function in a healthy way. We believe, however, that such discussion should be carried on without impugning the loyalty of the great body of our people, Catholic Protestant and Jewish, to the foundation principles of the Republic. Unless we recognize this common loyalty, fraternal relations become difficult and the mutual confidence essential to our working together in community enterprise becomes imperiled.

Such mutual confidence is more than ever necessary in these times when we face tasks upon the successful accomplishment of which the fate of civilization itself depends. We still have to make peace and avert another world war. We have to organize our economy to provide for the needs of all without sacrificing our liberties to the tyranny of a police state. We have to find types of education that will make man, as a spiritual being, master of the science and technology that, uncontrolled, will destroy him. We have to fight racial discrimination and a deadening secularism that denies the religious basis of life.

The differences in outlook that separate us are important. It is essential that we acknowledge and study them. But it would be tragic if in considering these differences we should drift into attitudes of hopeless antagonism toward

one another. The religious and racial conflicts of the old world with their bitter consequences warn us against this danger. Along with the emphasis on differences, let there be also a common quest for a deeper understanding of the spiritual objectives of these great religious groups and their ways of life. From such understanding may come a new spiritual climate in which the work of all the communions may be more fruitful.

4. Undertakings that seek through personal collaboration of religiously motivated persons of different faiths regarding problems of the community, and public interpretation in relation thereto, such as the National Conference of Christians and Jews, and its related district and community committees.

5. Undertakings relating to procedures for securing long-time gains in intercultural education and the reduction of intergroup tensions, such as the remarkable work of certain school systems like Springfield, Detroit, and Pittsburgh; and the intensive studies in the field of group dynamics fostered by the American Jewish Congress.

6. Undertakings like the USO (United Service Organizations) by which partner organizations with representation or competence for representing the approach and contributions of Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish faiths join in extensive and long-continued "joint and several" responsibility on behalf of American Youth in a war emergency; and yet also in their own interest as "religious" agencies to stand together in relation to both government and public as the symbol and servant of recognized social, religious and recreational objectives.

7. Undertakings that represent within themselves the merging, not of the faiths but of those who hold them, in a program of contacts and fellowship designed to provide opportunity for mutual respect and worthy community action. They will already have understood that the Y.M.C.A. itself is one of many such organizations.

What importance or validity have these methods for building understanding for an organization like the Y.M.C.A.?

The pattern first listed, we may assume, is designedly drastic and, if not aggressive, at least defensive. It seeks to equate power. While its apparent objective should have the support of all citizens, the implications and timing of its organization suggest that it may not represent an approach with which Y.M.C.A.'s as such would most naturally want to be identified.

The last, we well know, lies so close to the present condition and aim of the Y.M.C.A.'s diversified constituency and program that its challenge lies in fulfillment rather than adoption.

Between the first and last lie five worthy patterns, not mutually exclusive, that men of goodwill are using to similar if not common ends. One immediately recognizes that in certain of them, there is a place, possibly an important place for official sanction before truly representative participation is possible. Yet when this has been allowed for, one may well raise the question whether in them, given what it already has and is, may not lie for the Young Men's Christian Association the best clue for the discharge of its own responsibility for working toward the best possible relation between Catholicism in the United States and itself. For there appears to be none of these patterns that could not, at least in some measure, offer the suggestion of enrichment of what it now is and of what it might do with those of its members who are of the Catholic faith.

---

### NINTH DIAGNOSIS

As this study has progressed, and involved larger and more complex relationships that reach around the world, it has become increasingly evident that within the life and range of the Y.M.C.A. itself, and in its relationships in the local community will be found the clues to the understanding of the Y.M.C.A.'s wider problem of relationships. Four such clues, each with its accompanying queries, are here noted:

1. *The reconciliation between the implications of the World's Committee action regarding relations with the Roman Catholic Church (page 158), and current pressures on the Y.M.C.A. from Protestant Church Councils and related groups, must be achieved chiefly in terms of local community adjustments.* The implications of the World's Committee counsel regarding "a sense of parity in participation and responsibility in Association affairs" are, of course, profound in any local community in the United States just at this time. The aggressive

steps being taken by many local Church Councils present an equal challenge since they involve a desire to secure official representation on Y.M.C.A. Boards on behalf of the interests of ecumenical Protestantism. Here are two conceptions of ecumenicity, and it is not improbable that many local Y.M.C.A. leaders will be confused between them for years to come.

2. *The tension between a resurgent but still somewhat defensive Protestantism in the United States, and the gathering social and cultural forces making for better-integrated community life, challenges the Y.M.C.A. more than most organizations since, as matters stand, these two factors often appear to be in conflict and both are vital to its own life.* It is true, as reports reviewed in Chapter Nine have suggested, that Protestant leaders and those in the forefront of social welfare efforts are men of goodwill, both relying on Y.M.C.A. participation and both benefiting the Y.M.C.A. The Y.M.C.A.'s immediate conflict arises from the unlikelihood that in many American communities, with a substantial and increasing non-Protestant constituency, it will ever again be disposed openly to stress its strictly Protestant alignment if it wishes to accept and relate non-Protestants in parity as to participation and responsibility. A new level of statesmanship will be called for so disciplined as to be wise in any accommodations made and so far-seeing as to sense the bearing of what is being done in one community upon a complex and sensitive national and international relationship.

3. *The need for active processes of intercultural education and experimental studies in the reduction of intergroup tensions stands out as a strategic area for advance.* It is said that solutions begin with what is in one's hands, that is, with what is *at hand*. What is the potential within the Y.M.C.A.'s reach? That it has the problem, none will deny. That it has, within its constituency, the persons through and with whom the needed understandings might be worked out, can be demon-

strated. It need not attempt to secure from the official authorities of the different faiths any formal permission to attempt goals that lie within its own proven competence. It may not even be able to secure the supporting interest of related clergy. As a lay movement used to thinking and working with laymen, it can seek, within its own membership and contacts, practical ends deemed relevant to and worthy of the issues involved.

4. *The issues involved, local and worldwide as they are, demand a new adequacy of orientation unlikely to be secured by workaday attitudes formed in the complex of purely local factors and relationships.* The paradox that busy laymen occupied with their usual community obligations will be called on to furnish the creative factor in adjustments of such scope and moment will seem to some too serious to be resolved. Yet these local laymen, as board men and citizens, have become in this particular Age world figures. They must think in world terms and make decisions that affect world issues. They have—they must have else Democracy fail—the potential, and they also must increasingly demonstrate the actual, capacity. A consideration of utmost consequence, therefore, in an organization like the Y.M.C.A., is that of preparing lay leadership for this responsibility.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

# Interfaith Aspects of Y.M.C.A.-Church Relationships

---

Through the long decades of its development, the Y.M.C.A. came widely to be considered as an interdenominational agency. At important junctures of its history, churchmen of national prominence came so to regard it and so to speak of it. Latterly, however, this designation has been challenged by those who consider the term correctly used only when it implies a "representative" structure, that is, a body composed of persons officially delegated as representatives by component organizations.

The word "interfaith," as used in local parlance by Association leaders and as used here, implies no such representative structure, but a usage similar to the earlier meaning of "interdenominational" namely, a relationship between individuals of different faith groups within an organized framework.

Is the Y.M.C.A., in this sense, an interfaith organization?

### ***We Are What We Are***

Detailed recapitulation here of the data presented on this point in earlier chapters of this report will not be necessary. The reader will recall that today approximately one-fourth of the Y.M.C.A. members and registered constituents are Roman Catholics, the proportion rising up to and beyond 50 per cent in some Associations. The proportion of Jewish members is just above 5 per cent. These percentages may be increasing slightly.

The data show that from four to five per cent of the members



of local Y.M.C.A. Boards are Catholic or Jewish, the former being about three times the latter. This overall proportion has not changed substantially in recent years.

Fewer than two per cent of the Y.M.C.A.'s professional roster belong to other than Protestant faiths.

The official policies of the Y.M.C.A., as indicated by actions of the National Council, have been progressively "liberalized" in this respect over many years. Authorization exists for a larger degree of this kind of "liberalization" than has so far occurred and it would seem that elements of restraint, within the Association itself or in the community, are probably operating to hold the organization's course broadly in line with its tradition, despite tendencies toward inclusiveness without and within.

Certainly the Y.M.C.A. in the United States is definitely Protestant by tradition. Certainly, also, it is coming increasingly to be interfaith by composition, and by deliberate decisions of policy.

This seeming conflict is subtle rather than overt, as yet, differing from Association to Association. But it is real, in principle and in substance and, as it continues, it is certain to demand an affirmative solution.

### *Tactics and Dynamics*

The local condition in respect of this matter, so far as the citations of this report make it clear, is that of a growing complexity of composition and contacts without the appearance as yet of a selective principle upon which to base an affirmative policy. Rarely, if at all, does Protestant affiliation of the individual constituent, as such, represent such a principle.

In one Association, where the Protestant group provided most of the Association's leadership, though the Y.M.C.A.'s "formal relationship with Protestantism could be more intimate," an observer was uncertain whether Protestant, Catholic and Jew could "play a team game together as a great spiritual fellowship in spite of honest and profound religious differences." Association leaders in another city apparently believed that they had largely achieved such broad-mindedness in fellowship. In still another, a staff member indicated that "up to three years ago he felt that the Association should be militant, active and aggressive

as a Protestant movement; but today he feels that as a Christian organization, programs and aims should seek to build a fellowship across different sectarian lines and should emphasize Christian, rather than Protestant, characteristics."

There is evidence that a substantial body of opinion exists in certain Associations that the Y.M.C.A. has become definitely "interconfessional" in effort and temper. In other Associations there are indications that Protestant tradition is still strong enough to resist such accommodation. In one city it was believed that "far bolder experimentation than has yet been attempted" is called for (in a city where the Y.M.C.A. is still predominantly Protestant in outlook) in the hope that "the consequent 'cross-fertilization' would increase the continuity of all membership, broaden its meanings, etc." This was seen as a phase of a needed democratization by which the member, of whatever faith, would become more important in relation to policy.

In one Association some evidence was cited for a hope "that the Catholic Church will in years ahead become more liberal in its attitude toward Protestant organizations rendering community service."

There was evidence that the present complex composition of constituency makes fundamental demands on the character and equipment of professional personnel.

Reference was earlier made to the fact that in one large city a secretary of the Jewish faith was added to the staff because of the large number of Jewish members. So far "the experiment" seemed "well justified" since "it has made for better feeling and better understanding on the part of Jewish members as well as others." It was said that "the fact that the membership is composed so largely of different religious and cultural groups raises seriously the question . . . whether the present professional staff understands and appreciates their point of view. Either Protestant leadership needs to achieve better understandings and appreciation or a different type of leadership needs to be provided if the large Catholic and Jewish groupings are to continue in the membership."

Some Associations appear to believe that, because of program participation trends, their interfaith policy is an important

factor in providing adequate financial support whether through the Chest or directly. Financing by Protestant sources primarily was seen as a limiting factor in one city, though heavily relied upon in others.

The Jewish group was reported as outstanding in its support of Association work in one large city where the Association "now seeking closer co-operation and better understanding with labor," was hoping for some change in relation with Catholic support by reason of its 52.7% of Catholic constituency at present and the predominance of young Catholics in its group work program. There was no mention of the Protestants in the list of dynamic factors in this situation.

In one city, a Protestant minister believed "that were the Y.M.C.A. to become more definitely Protestant in affiliations and character, it might lose some Chest support."

The foregoing citations refer to specific local circumstances within the general framework of facts summarized at the beginning of this chapter. A single citation of the composition of one particular nationally-organized program group will illustrate the dynamic aspect of this interfaith trend. For example, a study of the membership of 100 Business Men's Clubs (an adult men's health club with special facilities) revealed the following percentages: Protestant, 60.7; Catholic, 21.1; Jewish, 12.8; Others, 5.4. Members of these clubs are usually fairly influential members of the community, and help to create the dynamic pressures of opinion and expectancy that so largely determine the Association's course.

Is the course ahead largely determined, then, by these circumstances? What is best? What alternatives are there?

### ***What Alternatives Exist?***

In exact usage, there is but one "alternative," a second choice. In freer usage, there may be many "alternatives" among which the best is sought and chosen. Are there such alternatives for the Young Men's Christian Association today, as it carries forward its program and services among those of various faiths while expressing the intrinsic values of its Protestant tradition? Some possibilities have been mentioned in this and earlier chapters.

To those who have studied closely the responses Associations are making under the circumstances described, it appears that there are perhaps five positions or "alternatives." They are not set sharply apart, one from the other. Like factors or characteristics may be found in adjacent descriptions. But taken together these positions from a scale that may help some Associations and leaders to see with somewhat greater clarity where they now are and whither they are tending. Let us examine them. They are here set forth schematically only. The number of Associations for each is, of course, not known.

### POSITION A

The local Association here described identifies itself with deep conviction in every possible way with the Protestant life of the city and any organized expression thereof, and seizes every opportunity to reaffirm this alignment.

The members of the Board of Directors are exclusively Protestant.

Voting power is held only by Protestants, that is, by "active" members, who are also members of Protestant Evangelical churches.

A strong Protestant tone is found in club and camp programs and in general meetings.

There is a conscious effort to avoid "toning down" because of the presence of non-Protestant members in such groupings.

Official identification with the local Council of Churches is maintained and active co-operation given.

All of the secretaries must be Protestants.

This Association expects the National Council and its agencies to maintain the closest possible tie with the Federal Council of Churches and other interdenominational agencies, and considers this to be a more appropriate and logical bond for the Y.M.C.A. Movement than with any other body or type of organization.

### POSITION B

This Association considers itself definitely a Protestant organization, but does not attempt continually to reiterate this fact, or to make certain that the public keep this connection in mind.

Its relationship to the Council of Churches is regarded as important but informal.

It has one or two non-Protestants on its Board of Directors.

Active membership is restricted to Protestants, who alone may vote.

All of the secretaries are Protestants.

The program planning considers youth needs and interests to be all-determining.

Some formal religious features are provided and are open to non-Protestants who may wish to attend.

Care is taken to avoid offending any of such participants.

National affiliations with organized Protestantism are cherished along with various other national affiliations.

### POSITION C

This Association reaffirms and makes much of its basis as a Christian organization.

It stresses the development of Christian personality and uniting with others in bringing about a Christian society.

It says little about Protestant identification.

It retains its tie with the organized Protestant forces of the community, but regards this as somewhat nominal.

Some non-Protestants are on the Board of Directors. They have demonstrated their genuine sympathy with the Association's statement of purpose.

Matters having distinctively Protestant implication are rarely brought up in the Board.

A program designed to fit the purpose is conceived as broadly Christian, and emphasizes the possibility of religious emphasis and value through all well-conducted activity.

Secretaries are sought who are in sympathy with this conception, and some who are not Protestants have been employed, particularly where the constituency to be served has a large proportion of non-Protestant faith.

This Association encourages its national organization to foster close ties with all other religious, educational, social work and recreational bodies but does not particularly stress Protestant connections.

### POSITION D

This Association attempts to function on what is substantially an "interfaith" basis.

While a majority of its Board of Directors are Protestants, little is anything said about the Association's Protestant connections, and much greater emphasis is put upon its non-sectarian or "interfaith" character.

The Association's statement of purpose is broad, stressing fourfold character development in rather general terms.

Voting is open to all who accept this service.

Program emphasis is put upon character-building through informal or leisure-time education, group work and recreational programs, with slight reference to religious activities as such.

This Association makes much of opportunities for interfaith contact and association in community life, maintaining but not stressing relation with interdenominational groups of Protestant outlook.

Though in fact most of the professional staff have Protestant connections, members of other faiths are accepted without distinction if otherwise qualified.

This Association regards favorably the widest possible identification of its national body and services with social work, educational, recreational and welfare interests, and is not greatly concerned with maintaining formal ties with Protestant organizations as such.

#### POSITION E

This Association practically ignores any particular religious consideration and scarcely ever refers to Protestant origin, connections or concerns as such.

In this respect it is not unlike a boys' club, or scout organization, or certain settlements.

Many religious affiliations, including various that are non-Protestant, are noted among its Board members. Choice of such persons rests upon sympathy with and support of the cause rather than religious affiliation.

Voting power, likewise, has no reference to religious bodies.

The program seeks to follow the best insights from social work, group work, educational and recreational practices of the various community organizations, but includes definitely religious activities only very incidentally if at all.

The staff interests correspond. Most staff members are in fact Protestants, but some represent other faiths and have equal standing and opportunity for advancement.

This Association considers itself to be primarily a social agency, without any special religious affiliation or obligation; and would encourage a similar conception as to national policy.

### ***Opinions Differ***

In the study described in some detail in Chapter Nine, opinions were sought from executives of Councils of Social Agencies, Councils of Churches and of Y.M.C.A.'s as to what bearing, if any, the increasing number of Catholics and Jews in the Y.M.C.A. membership might have had upon Y.M.C.A. relations with the Council.

In general both groups of Council executives avoided the bearing of the question upon the other's organization.

Executives of Councils of Social Agencies were strongly of the opinion that the Y.M.C.A.'s inclusive membership had no adverse effect upon Y.M.C.A. relations with their Councils. On the contrary, the majority considered the effect favorable. Such views were expressed as these:

"Improved relationships."

"Makes co-operation easier."

"Broader outlook."

"Helpful in meeting problems of racial and religious discrimination."

"Would look with favor on that practice."

"Interfaith participation in Y program has tended to minimize religious differences and emphasize positive interfaith relationship, help to create kind of democratic formulation essential to constructive council program."

Fourteen Y.M.C.A. executives felt this membership practice had no effect at all on Y.M.C.A. relations with the Council of Social Agencies. Others felt the effect quite favorable. One said "Catholic and Jewish persons in the Council were more appreciative of the Y.M.C.A." Another thought it made for "readier acceptance" of the Y.M.C.A. as a "broad social-religious but not sectarian agency." One said "had we not widened our relationship, unfortunate results would have followed."

Among Church Council executives, there were fourteen who felt the inclusive membership practice had little if any effect also upon Y.M.C.A. relationships with Councils of Churches.

One said that his Council "approved the policy." Another thought it "advances the ecumenical spirit." Still another spoke in very practical terms saying that a "healthy interfaith committee has meant much to better understanding and united effort." Twenty Association executives also felt these membership practices brought no adverse effects in Y.M.C.A.-Church Council relations.

However, Church Council leaders in twelve cities held different opinions on this matter. Such views as the following were expressed by one or more of these executives:

"Trend regarded with question by many churches."

"Occasional criticism that Y no longer Christian."

"Tends to weaken ties."

"Practice questioned by denominational leaders."

"Program emphases away from Christian."

"Probably responsible for lack of integration of Hi-Y and church youth groups."

"Catholic and Jewish leaders made little difference—non-religious leaders becoming members and given outstanding leadership has given rise to criticism and endorsement to idea Association is non-Christian or non-religious."

"Often tends to cause Y leaders to shy from Protestant constituents or churches as such, so becoming 'community' and unidentified."

"At times a reluctance to be identified as positively Protestant. This has diminished lately."

There were some, but not many, secretaries who shared such views, which is not strange since in a measure the Association's policy and administration were both somewhat under reproach.

Though Y.M.C.A. relationships with these two important Councils may not be taken as a completely satisfactory indication of the acceptability of an interfaith membership policy, and certainly not as a basis for judging the significance of such a policy, these reports of attitudes have a bearing that must be taken into account. It is clear that the majority of those responding favored these interfaith relationships. A number did not respond. A number have expressed concern about the Y.M.C.A. tendency to broaden its composition and weaken its former ties. Many executives of Y.M.C.A.'s and Councils of



Social Agencies, and perhaps some Church Council executives, would feel that this latter need not happen.

### ***On Not Being Naïve***

However facilely the term "interfaith" comes to the mind and speech of the Association leader, it would be most unfortunate if it should ever become common parlance without a thoroughgoing consideration of what it involves. The faith of men is, perhaps, their most precious possession. Those who talk glibly about it, or who ignore it, or presume to conform it with that of others, need sober reflection about its origin and function in human experience.

If there is to be an interfaith program in some form, whether it implies a representative structure or only a free fellowship, those who are concerned to bring it about should also be concerned that it be worthy of its heritage. Far from a nonchalant notion that "one religion is as good as another," and far from assuming that men of other faiths would be quite as ready to abdicate that heritage as many Protestant liberals appear to be, those who presume to work toward interfaith relations should be appreciative of elements of truth anywhere that may be distinctive, and both sensitive, patient and respectful toward the quest for a relationship that will enhance intergroup understanding at the high level of faith.

It has been the great mission and privilege of most of the North American secretaries sent abroad over nearly sixty years under the World Service Program, to work intimately toward relieving tensions and creating fellowship among young men of diverse social, racial, economic, cultural and religious groups. The lot of minorities has been familiarly known. Yet some will not without reason wonder whether, by and large, the Association secretary in this country has been equipped, trained or disciplined for a genuinely creative role in the service of a worthy interfaith ideal.

It is commonly believed, for example, among Association leaders, that the opportunity for reaching any formal understanding with leaders of the Roman Catholic faith is small indeed. The record in Poland, and possibly in a few other countries notwithstanding, there is little evidence anywhere in the

United States that those who set the policies and dogmas of that Church, will ever in the foreseeable future look comfortably or generously upon Y.M.C.A. contacts for their young people, or upon responsible leadership by their laymen in Y.M.C.A. affairs. There are, here and there, priests or bishops more liberal and tolerant, or perhaps more versatile tacticians, than those elsewhere. And there may well be some "experimental" situations, in settings otherwise favorable, where a qualified co-operation is authoritatively enjoined. But it must ever be borne in mind that "religious instruction" is jealously regarded as both a prerogative and a duty of the Church,—something not to be tampered with by laymen nurtured in the wayward and flexible doctrines of the Reformation.

There remains, to be sure, if one accepts that the function of religious training may be so segregated, the possibility of co-operation at the "secular" level. Whatever such a doctrine may mean, in practical terms, as an expression of a genuine spirit of interfaith, it is possible, even highly desirable and urgent, that Association leaders should attempt to seek better to understand *experimentally* what the possibilities and limitations of such collaboration may be. It is probable, however, that if the Y.M.C.A. were ever to accept the principle of segregation here discussed, it would be regarded by Protestant churchmen as a final abandonment of any pretense of being a religious agency.

Much of what has been said in these paragraphs is within the knowledge and practical experience of most Association leaders many of whom assume, however, that in the case of their Jewish members, no such consideration or restraints exist.

But this is hardly true today. Those who carry on work under Jewish auspices most nearly akin to what the Y.M.C.A. has done are, it is authoritatively known, deeply engaged in reexamining their own objectives, and particularly concerned to identify and establish the measure of "Jewish content" in their programs appropriate to the needs of a minority in American life under a scheme of relationships generally designated as "cultural pluralism" or "cultural supplementation." By it, an "ethnic or ancestral group with a distinctive spiritual and cultural individuality fashioned by a common social heritage," may play its part "sanctioned and validated" within the American tradition.

It would be incredible for any Y.M.C.A. leader to assume that his organization could play any worthy part, or that it should play any part at all, in a project of cultural training and adjustment so rooted in the past and drawn from its record of faith and suffering. Indeed, if these ends are worthy, it might even be that any extended service by Y.M.C.A.'s to Jewish clientele would be equivalent to robbing them of experiences of great cultural significance—whatever intercultural benefits might be sought or obtained.

Let the Association leader not be naïve, therefore, or yield to easy rationalization, as he seeks to justify the possible drift toward a less Protestant position by wishing to be more "inter-faith."

---

### TENTH DIAGNOSIS

With the presentation of the final body of data in the present study, it becomes necessary again to review our understanding of Y.M.C.A.-Church relations, this time in an even wider context. Four considerations stand out:

1. *The Y.M.C.A. has shown substantial capacity over nearly a century to extend its fellowship and service beyond group barriers.* Its record is one of finding ways of advancing beyond age, class, sex, educational, economic, racial, religious and nationality limits toward inclusiveness. It is true that in some areas, such as racial or economic, its advances have been somewhat less aggressive than in others; but when viewed in even a world-wide context, the direction is clear and the achievement substantial. In a time like this, it may be observed, considerable prestige attaches to such broadening outlook and operation. Today men have distrust of anything that suggests narrowness of outlook or spirit. The appeal is to larger loyalties: from group to agency to interagency and community; from provincialism, through localism, nationalism and isolationism to internationalism; from sectarianism, denominationism and interdenominationism to ecumenism, and possibly

even interconfessionalism. Herein lies a danger, namely, that in embracing the more and more inclusive, one abandon the more immediate and definitive. The Y.M.C.A. appears to face this danger in the field of its church-related behavior.

2. *The actual choices before the Association, in its relation to Protestantism and other faiths, are not as clear-cut, in terms of practical alternatives, as may appear logically.* But the result of choices made, or of drift through lack of choosing, is decisive. In the life of an organization like the Y.M.C.A. in the local community, such choices do not appear in a single context at a particular time, but are both multiple and cumulative. Few Associations have made, or perhaps few would ever make deliberately, the choices that have led them a considerable distance away from their traditional Protestant anchorage. It would appear that for many of them, their present position results from drift rather than conviction, and their defense of it more largely from an understandable tendency to rationalize or justify than from any thoroughgoing philosophy.

3. *The Association's dilemma, as between an emotional anchorage in historical Protestantism, and a tendency toward interfaith acceptance, can be resolved only by rethinking its major objectives.* This does not mean that the evangelical origins of the Association in a lay Protestant revival require of it a campaign of active proselytism, or that an inclusive, interfaith policy would require abdicating what is most characteristically religious and valid in the Association's heritage. There can be balance; there may be comity; there *is* fellowship. In practical terms, the inclusion of members of other faiths in the fellowship would imply, in our understanding of the spirit of democracy, their participation at appropriate points in control. If such participation is to have useful meaning, there must also be participation in the process of rethinking objectives,—a demanding task for which few laymen are skilled

and many are not ready. The Association's present dilemma in this field lies not so much in the apparent contrast between the Protestant conception and the interfaith ideal as in the sharp conflict between an easy drift with the trend of inclusive practices, and the exacting duty of guiding the Movement's lay leadership through an authentic and adequate restudy of fundamental aims.

4. *Capacity for decision, on so fundamental an issue as the Y.M.C.A.'s Church relationship, is limited by the necessary process of lay consideration just described, by the essentially local and varied nature of operative contacts and judgments, and by the extreme difficulty of securing any sufficient consensus.* The Y.M.C.A., in the United States alone, is an extensive organization in a vast land where direct contacts are next to impossible. Schemes of jurisdiction, based on the principle of self-determination, services of supervision and communication, travel practices, and the like, provide only a modicum of what would be required to build a common mind as to Y.M.C.A.-Church relations realistically based upon local commitments and practices. The ease with which the Movement's official bodies have at times made ringing affirmation of historic positions in this field, without knowledge of or reference to the trend of local practices, suggests that a more carefully devised means may be needed by which what Association leaders in the field are actually thinking about current objectives, and what they are doing about the needed clarification of church relations, are brought together in a decisive nationwide judgment as to policy. Traditional attitudes and historic formulations are not enough. Fresh *decisions* are needed.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

# Summary and Final Diagnosis

---

The studies culminating in this report have ranged back over several years and have had somewhat varied objects. They were closely related in this respect, however—each had to do with some aspect of the Y.M.C.A. as bearing upon its relationship to organized church life.

### I. STUDY OBJECTIVES AND LIMITATIONS

At times these studies were concerned mainly with Y.M.C.A. relationships with Protestant churches but even in these, as in other studies, the facts often compelled broader reference. In the original plan of study occurred the following paragraphs:

The discussions lying back of the agreement to develop this study suggest that a fresh and comprehensive study of the actual identification of the Association with Protestantism is needed and that historical and philosophical, as well as sociological approaches are indicated. Various current considerations that bear on the problem are: 1) the ecumenical movement in Protestantism; 2) the movement toward federation and union among Protestant Churches; 3) the movement toward interfaith understanding, appreciation and collaboration; and 4) the increasing identification of Y.M.C.A.'s with social agencies.

In addition, the co-operation of the Y.M.C.A. with the USO has precipitated, at a new stage, questions as to the means by which the Y.M.C.A. in this relationship may strengthen the Churches' approach to men in service; and beyond this, the acceptance and acceptability of Association activity on behalf of the Protestant Churches in this whole field of relationships. One fundamental question relates to the ability of the Y.M.C.A. to represent Protes-

tant Churches officially in any relationship including those aspects of interfaith co-operation represented in the USO enterprise.

In considerable measure, the studies first contemplated have been carried through. Where this was not done, decisions calling for use of different methods were reached by the principal committee in charge. As the project progressed and broadened in scope, other committees and additional methods were introduced. One or two earlier studies were used. As a consequence, therefore, it is in order here to list the studies on which this report is primarily based:\*

1. Church affiliation of Y.M.C.A. Members (1932).
2. History of Y.M.C.A.-Church Relations in the United States (1944).
3. Study of Y.M.C.A. Constituency after One Hundred Years (1942).
4. Second Constituency Study (1947).
5. Religious Affiliations of Y.M.C.A. Board Members (1940 and 1948).
6. Religious Affiliation of Y.M.C.A. Secretaries (1948).
7. Agenda for discussion of the Improvement and Enrichment of Relationship between the Y.M.C.A. and the Protestant Churches (1943-4).
8. The Relation of Religious Affiliation to Member Continuity and Growth (1945).
9. Y.M.C.A.-Council of Churches Relationships (1948).
10. An Inquiry concerning certain Community Relationships of the Y.M.C.A., Councils of Churches and Councils of Social Agencies (1944).

For the present purpose, it was thought advisable to present the findings of these studies in the form of a "diagnostic" report whose purpose, in the language of Chapter One, has been "to help leaders of Associations and Churches better to understand what the present-day relationship actually is, whence it has been derived, and the possible direction of its further development." The reader may now judge the extent to which this purpose has been justified and fulfilled.

Such a procedure has necessarily had certain limitations.

---

\* See list of personnel of the various studies on page 195.

Studies undertaken as independent units sometimes do not play easily into the broader analysis here attempted. Some studies were less thoroughgoing and complete because of war-time preoccupations. Some additional studies would have contributed to the present analysis. At certain points, further needed studies are proposed.

Against this list of obvious limitations, it is somewhat reassuring to examine the list of persons who have contributed through one related committee or another to the total result. These names do not include many scores of persons who shared in local aspects of the studies. Among the names listed (see page 195) are many eminent leaders of both Church and Association, including laymen of standing in Church, Y.M.C.A., business and professional life. It is an earnest of the importance attaching to the subject that men like these were ready to give time to some phase of this inquiry. Their participation gives assurance that no phase of the project has lacked anything that careful consideration could give.

## II. FINAL DIAGNOSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE Y.M.C.A.-CHURCH RELATIONSHIP

It is unnecessary in this final examination to attempt to recapitulate all of the data presented nor all of the various points made in the ten partial diagnoses that precede. It seems appropriate, however, to bring into focus whatever factors disclosed may have helped to clarify our understanding of the principal components of the relationship which gives concern: the Church and the churches, the community, the Y.M.C.A. trend and, finally, the conception of the Y.M.C.A. as a Movement which lies behind and beyond the current manifestation.

For this task of epitomizing and interpretation there is constant reference to the preceding diagnoses where fuller exposition or comment will be found than is necessary here.\*

---

\* For the reader's convenience, the preceding diagnoses may be found as follows:

First	Page 22	Sixth	Page 96
Second	Page 30	Seventh	Page 116
Third	Page 39	Eighth	Page 136
Fourth	Page 61	Ninth	Page 163
Fifth	Page 79	Tenth	Page 177



***Concerning the Church and the Churches as Parties to the Relationship***

Here once again, as at the opening discussion of the "distinctive aims of the churches" reported in certain local discussions (page 49), we must disavow any intention of presuming to discuss the great Mission of the Church, or of Protestantism, or of the Church Ecumenical and Universal, or any other of the great conceptions which have guided and sustained the Church's life as an instrument of Almighty God down through the Ages.

We are concerned with its current manifestations in contemporary life, and particularly as to the aspect of relationship with it as an entity (or as separate entities) by the Y.M.C.A. in the communities where Y.M.C.A.'s function.

We have observed

1) That Y.M.C.A. relations with the churches have hitherto been primarily with the individual churches in the local community, not overlooking important instances where the Y.M.C.A. had relations with groups of denominations, or church representatives of particular interests, such as student work, or with early forms of interdenominational organization.

2) That the advent of local Councils of Churches, with their emphasis upon structural representation, presents more tangibly than hitherto the question as to the basis upon which any formal relationship of the Y.M.C.A. should rest. Although such Councils are as yet operating in only a minority of the communities in which Y.M.C.A.'s now operate, they pose the question as to what Y.M.C.A. policy should be recommended not only in these local relationships but in relation to all interdenominational bodies operating nationally as well as in international relationships, including the World Council of Churches itself.

3) That the Y.M.C.A., unquestionably derived from Protestant origins, and long regarding itself as "interdenominational" (in the sense that most of its members and, until latterly, all of its bodies of control, were drawn from the great body of active Protestant church laymen) is apparently no longer regarded among Protestant church agencies and leaders as correctly

structured and hence competently "representative" of organized Protestantism.

4) That an age-long struggle between the historic Protestant movement and the Church of Rome appears to be approaching one of the most severe periods of tension in the story of their relations in the United States, involving fundamental questions and interpretations of the historic doctrine of separation of church and state under our Constitution; and that in this context, both locally and nationally, church views of what relationship the Y.M.C.A. should sustain are undoubtedly seen to some degree in terms of self-interest, though often discussed in terms of "loyalty."

5) That "organized Protestantism" as represented in the local community by Councils of Churches and Church Federations (but not by minister's associations) is a sufficiently recent development to lead to some manifestations of authoritarian attitude and desire for control. This may be expected to disappear with greater maturity, with correspondingly greater appreciation of the importance of other organized approaches to community welfare, and of measures needed for meeting more satisfactorily the needs of young people.

6) That the projection of these considerations into an international and world context by the formation of a World Council of Churches, and the invoking of the ecumenical concept as the authoritative form for organization in local communities, can easily produce doctrinaire attitudes likely to hinder existing effective co-operation at many points, especially for organizations like the Y.M.C.A. locally involved in a complex network of local relationships, and having productive ties abroad that extend beyond ecumenical Protestantism or ecumenical Christianity as presently conceived.

### ***Concerning the Community as Conditioning the Relationship***

Though we are not unaware of certain broader conceptions of the community familiar to sociologists and social psychologists, we are here concerned primarily with the local geographical community where men live, play and work, where youth needs are seen in sharp detail, and where Y.M.C.A.-Church relationships come into focus.

It may as well be recognized that there is a sense in which all general conceptions of the nature and aims of great organizations are distorted by the local context and by the provincialism of community, which may also mean the provincialism of the like-minded as well. But there is also an important sense in which the significant characteristics of such organizations are to a large extent first shaped in local relationships, whatever later modifications may result from wider connections. No doubt churches, like homes and schools, have their primary character established there.

The social forces of the local community are powerful forces and likely, at a given moment, to take precedence over all that can be imposed or offered from outside.

We have seen

1) That community dynamics powerfully affect the nature of organizations and the behavior of individuals, and that the Y.M.C.A. is closely involved therewith; that community acceptance is a strength, just as community support is a necessity; that a suggested Protestant "front" by which the Y.M.C.A.'s financial requirements might be met by organized Protestant effort was seen to be unrealistic despite the large amount of such support from members of such churches down through the years; that youth needs, of whatever religious persuasion, assume definite and appealing form in the local community, where plans are made and programs projected; that there group pressures, including church pressures, assert themselves; and that there confidence is largely won or lost.

2) That co-operation between social welfare organizations is now the prevailing temper in the local community, and "community organization" a growing and even dominant interest; that despite some fears and abuses where there is undue concentration of authority, the move toward co-operative planning, federated financing, standards of competence, greater objectivity, and a "laboratory" approach to local needs approaches maturity; that prestige attaches to breadth of outlook and quality of service; that concentration upon local problems and needs puts the test of co-operation close at hand, yet not to the detriment of more distant needs or broader objectives; that

all of this is more than mere "togetherness," and involves new loyalties and responsibilities that need not destroy but may rather fulfill other vital ties and relationships.

3) That the effective working relationship of the Protestant churches, and their characteristic pattern of behavior in relation to this development, does not yet appear to have been worked out in any consistent form; that church relations appear still to be at the "ministerial association" stage in probably three-fourths of the cities where Y.M.C.A.'s are at work, so that patterns of relationship proposed by Church Councils would be based upon assumptions that differ in important respects from those obtaining in most communities; that the Y.M.C.A. cannot, however, with formal church approval, be considered as "representing" the Protestant churches in the community's planning and conduct of welfare, recreational and leisure-time programs among youth; and that it does not appear likely that many local Y.M.C.A.'s would care to consider an exclusive identification with Protestant youth or Protestant churches in respect of the community youth-serving function here emphasized.

4) That an important project of intercultural education, at the level of religious differences, is much needed in the local community; that the reduction of intergroup tensions is a field to which the Y.M.C.A., by its present composition and program diversification, should be able to contribute significantly; and that for such a role it might well be better able to make its contribution as a body independent of formal church connection than might be the case if it were generally accepted or newly declared to be an instrument of organized Protestantism.

#### ***Concerning the Trend in the Y.M.C.A. itself as Affecting its Church-related Behavior***

By now, the reader is so familiar with the principal recent manifestations of Y.M.C.A. behavior, as they bear specifically upon Y.M.C.A.-Church relationships, that it might be reasonable to omit this restatement. However, in the interest of completeness of summary, let it be recalled

1) That the Y.M.C.A.'s constituency has for some years in-

cluded considerable and increasing numbers with other than Protestant background and ties; and that in some degree, though to less extent, this is true also of boards of control and of the secretaryship itself.

2) That the general trend organizationally is "outward," toward greater inclusiveness, with the erstwhile "controls" established to protect against going "too far" gradually being relaxed or abandoned; that powerful community forces and certain aspects of prestige (as stated) appear to have strongly reinforced this trend; that the word "Christian" has superseded "Evangelical" in salient articles of the National Constitution; that the competent body of the World's Alliance of Y.M.C.A.'s has recently (August, 1947) approved "a sense of parity in participation and responsibility in Association affairs" for Roman Catholics in view of the Y.M.C.A.'s establishment "in 18 predominantly Roman Catholic countries"; and that the ultimate bearing of these facts upon Y.M.C.A. policies in American communities (which are largely autonomous) can hardly fail to be profound.

3) That the essential character of the Y.M.C.A. affords the most significant insight into what Y.M.C.A.-Church relationships have been, and are likely to be; that Y.M.C.A. laymen are, by and large, the product of training over a generation by the churches of Protestantism, so that their judgment may be trusted as not inimical even if it should lead the Associations to a kind of bond no less free than it has been, and no more formal than it needs to be to permit the Y.M.C.A., as a free fellowship of younger and older laymen from many church backgrounds, to serve youth, community and church according to their best understanding.

4) That the unavoidably local nature of Y.M.C.A. experience (and the tendency of Y.M.C.A. leaders in recent years to think primarily in local terms about nation-wide, movement-wide, and world-wide interests) accurately identifies the principal determinant of what Y.M.C.A. policy, even as to church relations, will probably be; and that because of this local orientation that can so easily become sheer provincialism, the task of building a common mind that balances church and community

considerations on a basis fair both to local, national and world-wide responsibilities is one of the greatest challenges of its 100 years of service.

5) That the task of professional leaders during this time of an "outward" trend is made more difficult by reason of the complexity of the administrative role which is theirs to perform, by the heightened community standard and expectancy as to what is being done and needs to be done, by the unprecedented task of specific lay training still required despite extended church training, and by the absence, in most instances, of any adequate provision in previous or present programs for the professional training of secretaries for their unavoidable responsibility for dealing creatively with Y.M.C.A.-Church relations.

### ***Concerning the Y.M.C.A. as a Distinctive, Historic Movement with a Mission***

We are here concerned with the identity and integrity of a Movement that, after one hundred years of Christian service among young men of all classes, races and creeds around the world, has no desire to be "contained" or possessed.

It does desire and seek worthy understandings and relationships with all constructive agencies including, in view of its origin and unique history, especially close co-operative though not organic relationships with the churches of whose life it has been so much a part, and whose life has so generously sustained it.

As a world-wide organization, it is concerned, among other things, with all relationships that build and support understanding, and that make for a just and durable peace. It is an axiom of the belief of its leaders that undergirding the peace and progress of mankind will be found the leadership and influence of the Christian churches, and especially the churches of the Protestant movement. The leaders of the Y.M.C.A. look, with other Christians, to the coming unity of the Church Ecumenical, a unity partial but prophetic, and join with others in the worthy hope that as that unity grows, the unbroken reign of brotherhood may come.

Because these great realities have an aspect both immediate

and ultimate, the Y.M.C.A. in the United States, as in the local community or group where its members have their principal relationships, must fulfill its part of that worthy hope by dealing worthily with tasks near at hand, with obligations for which it carries responsibility.

The integration of this Movement in the United States is a loose but very real integration. Though distances and the sectional spirit and erstwhile conflicts of policy have divided it on occasion, few will gainsay that in great tasks performed, in broad outlook, and in demonstrated common will, the Y.M.C.A. is probably more nearly united in character and spirit than at any time in a half century.

It is probably fair to suggest, also, that not for many years has the Association's potential common will been directed deliberately toward the basic questions of its church relationship dealt with in this report. Should the Association determine to do this in the immediate future, it will probably need to take account of considerations like these:

1. The Y.M.C.A., by local demonstration and national implication,

- Treasures its independence and autonomy.

- Operates as a lay organization under control of church laymen.

- Concerns itself with religious values and motivations.

- Concentrates on youth needs.

- Seeks a participating constituency representative of the community.

- Exhibits an effective unity, but is not a highly disciplined body subject to central direction.

- Trains its lay leadership through committee responsibility.

- Reflects community pressures and group interests.

- Co-operates heartily in inter-organizational efforts toward common ends.

2. It appears altogether probable in connection with the problem under discussion, that the Association as currently understood, may be expected

- To reject exclusive Protestant identification;

- To seek to avoid structural representation of other groups in its own composition and control;

- To resist control by any body outside itself;

To establish goodwill relationships with all community agencies, co-operative relationships on matters of real consequence in fields of common interest and responsibility, and intimate consultative relationships where common concern for religious considerations and values would so indicate—most notably with Protestant church leadership; and.

To recognize, at the present time, a genuine need to reexamine existing understandings and practices and, where indicated, to consider without prejudice, readjustments based upon current responsibilities.

3. The problem defined in this report may be recognized as both serious and urgent for the Association, for the community, and for the Church. It is serious because the forces and dynamic relationships involved, if channeled toward confusion and conflict instead of confidence and co-operation, could well prove a disruptive factor locally and nationally. The problem is urgent, because the long drift in Y.M.C.A. policy and practice, and gathering tensions relating to alignments among the great religious bodies, appear to be approaching a critical stage. Beyond seriousness and urgency, the problem also has a certain preeminence for the Y.M.C.A. It touches the Association at one of its most vulnerable points. This is because the diversification of the Association's methods and services over nearly a century has made it difficult now for the Association itself to keep a clear perspective as to what it hopes to accomplish, and equally difficult for other organizations, including the churches, to know what they may expect from it or what they should attempt to achieve together with it.

It seems necessary, therefore, for the Association itself to come to grips with this serious, urgent, and preeminent problem. It can be clarified as to alternative courses only by a sufficiently thorough-going restudy of its fundamental aims, the aims that provide its dynamic motivations in a thousand communities. It cannot return to the traditional aims, as to a refuge,—whether to the aims of George Williams, or the Portland Convention, or the 1931 Statement of Purpose, or any other. None of these is really outmoded, but none is adequate. Only a fresh consensus, drawn direct from the devotion and intention of present-day members and those whom they elevate to



leadership, will be sufficient to declare the living purposes and direct the living energies of this Christian Movement at this fateful time.

Capacity for decision, by a far-extended organization, is enlarged by use, and lessened or lost by disuse. The most effective consensus in Y.M.C.A. experience is in small groups. Needed is a more carefully devised means by which to secure authentic consideration and judgment by such groups, and larger units to which they are related. What is needed is more than a formal convention vote, or even a plebiscite. It is a conviction, based upon informed deliberation, that will express what lay Christians in free association will to care for and stand for in a society that daily denies almost everything the Christian Church has meant since it was established.

It has been stated that the Y.M.C.A. is a distinctive historic Movement with a Mission. That it has been such must be gleaned from the record. Whether it is or will continue to be such must be discerned from the quality and dimension of the purposes that currently motivate its members and energize its corporate life. It is possible, many would say probable, that its Mission in the future is potentially much greater than even its leaders are aware.

### 3. WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

If any are troubled because they do not find in this final section some confident claim or emphatic forecast for the future, let them recall that the primary approach in this report was to be diagnostic rather than prophetic.

At the outset, it was stated that

As a diagnostic report, it does not suggest a return to some former idealized position, if such were possible, nor to propose and argue for a particular solution or course ahead. It seeks rather to marshal a somewhat wider range of facts than has usually been brought to bear on the subject hitherto, believing that it lies within the peculiar capacity of the Association, as an autonomous Christian lay movement, to determine its own course more wisely than it can be laid out by others, once the relevant conditions and circumstances are clearly set forth and fairly understood.

It was also said that the report could not be "a prophecy, though it must have some regard for attitudes in the present that are not likely to change quickly, and for present structures certain to define if not determine probabilities for a long time to come."

One may thus assume that the position between Church and Association that has been defined and illustrated in some detail in this report will hardly be resolved or substantially modified short of several years' time, and perhaps a generation. Institutional patterns are hardly amenable to sudden change; and, if they were, community mores and expectations would prevent.

But change, wholesome change, change for the better, can be envisaged, can be achieved. It is the confident faith of this serial diagnosis that the resources for significant and redemptive change, resources both human and Divine, are both available and adequate.

It would appear from reflection upon the historical summary of Y.M.C.A.-Church relations at the beginning of this volume that there exists nowhere therein an adequate precedent for the kind of reexamination now needed. Formal actions by legislative bodies, many of which have served as milestones hitherto, seem less promising than formerly and less derived from the experience of young laymen who must ever be the chief embodiment of the Movement's elemental strength. Commissions of historic renown, many of which worked devotedly and creatively to shape policies for acceptance, caught and formulated the prevailing temper of their time in a mood of loyalty that rarely envisaged the circumstances that press today upon the Association Movement for decision.

It is indeed a time for decision,\* as eminent leaders of Church and Association have warned—a decision, one fears, for which the Association is not ready.

It therefore becomes the concluding and climactic comment of this volume that nothing less than a Movement-wide undertaking, centered in local boards and committees, to redefine the Movement's fundamental aims in the United States would

---

\* See Shedd, Clarence P., "A Time for Decision in Y.M.C.A.-Church Relations," National Council Bulletin, January, 1946.

appear to carry within it a sufficient promise of the needed clarification and redirection of the energies and resources of so influential a body of laymen from the American churches as the Young Men's Christian Association represents.

This would be no short-term endeavor. It might be attempted in two or three years. There would need to be more carefully devised means than ever employed hitherto. There should be significant innovations. It would not be just a "speaking campaign." It would need to have a realistic and profoundly local focus, but its vision should be Movement-wide, Church-wide, nation-wide, world-wide. Leaders of the church would have an important working responsibility in it. It might be sobering to envisage what a few years of conscientious concentration, on the part of all interested in improving the Y.M.C.A.-Church relationship, could do to elevate that relationship into a working unity worthy of the Kingdom of God.

Such an endeavor could and should be an experience that in itself would produce spiritual growth among participating individuals and Associations. So understood, the effort would become nothing less than an attempt to learn afresh what is the will of God for an organization that for more than a century has counted itself "Christian" and tried to serve that ideal with devotion.

An endeavor like this could and should bear an impressive witness to the vitality of the Christian faith and the influence of the Christian Church, working in divers forms and manners down through the centuries to unite believers in a fellowship that will be a force for righteousness.

## Appendix

---

The following is a composite list of studies to which reference has been made in the preceding chapters of this volume, and of committees that have been responsible for certain of them.

The Committee of the Bureau of Records, Studies and Trends, under whose auspices the general project has been carried forward, became at the end responsible for the work of co-ordination. In consultation with this committee, and under its guidance, the director of the Bureau maintained a general consultation relationship to the successive studies, and wrote the present report. For some of the studies, no special committee was required. Where committees were named, this was done by formal appointment of the Bureau Committee chairman. Studies 7 and 10 were developed by individuals without formal committees.

Following the list of committees and studies, appears an alphabetical list of those who participated in the work of one or more of the designated committees. Numbers following their names indicate with which of these committees each individual served. While it did not prove possible for all of these co-operators to read the final report, at least two-thirds of them were able to do so within a rather exacting time schedule, and full account of their comment or criticism was taken in the final editing.

### *Committees and Studies*

1. Committee of the Bureau of Records, Studies and Trends of the National Board of the Y.M.C.A.'s.
2. A Study of the Church Affiliations of Y.M.C.A. Members (1932).
3. Studies of the Religious Affiliations of Y.M.C.A. Board Members (1940 and 1948).
4. Committee on the Study of Y.M.C.A. Constituency After One Hundred Years (1942).
5. Committee on the Study of Y.M.C.A. Relationships with Protestant Churches (1943-1944). This Committee prepared the "Agenda for Discussion of

the Improvement and Enrichment of Relationships between the Y.M.C.A. and the Protestant Churches."

6. A Sub-Committee of the foregoing, known as The Technical Committee, which prepared and conducted "An Inquiry Concerning Certain Community Relationships of the Y.M.C.A., Councils of Churches, and Councils of Social Agencies" (1944).
7. History of Y.M.C.A.-Church Relations in the United States (1944).
8. Committee on the Relation of Religious Affiliation to Member Continuity and Growth (1944).
9. Committee on the Second Constituency (1947).
10. A Study of Y.M.C.A.-Council of Churches Relationships (1948).
11. A Study of the Religious Affiliations of Y.M.C.A. Secretaries (1948).

### *Participating in one or more Studies*

- Adams, Wilman E., General Secretary, Y.M.C.A. Boston, Massachusetts. 5\*
- Baker, James C., Bishop of the Methodist Church. Los Angeles, California. 5
- Berlind, Frederick R., Program Secretary, Prospect Park Y.M.C.A. Brooklyn, New York. 9
- Beveridge, Oscar R., Carl Byoir Associates. New York, New York.
- Brandenburg, Earl W., Executive Secretary, Y.M.C.A. Retirement Fund. New York, New York. 1
- Bunting, James F., General Secretary, Y.M.C.A. Schenectady, New York. 4
- Carey, Clifford M., Secretary, Young Men's Work, National Board, Y.M.C.A. New York, New York. 9
- Carpenter, J. Henry., Brooklyn Church and Mission Federation (Brooklyn Division, Protestant Council). Brooklyn, New York City. 6
- Douglass, H. Paul, Committee on Co-operative Field Research. New York, New York. 5, 6
- Dickinson, Raymond L., Executive Vice-President, Y.M.C.A. New York, New York. 6
- Esgar, Mildred, National Social Welfare Assembly. New York, New York. 6
- Ford, Lyman S., Community Chests and Councils, Inc. New York, New York. 6
- Grant, Raymond S., General Secretary, Y.M.C.A. Westfield, New Jersey. 4, 8, 9
- Greene, Theodore Meyer, Professor of Philosophy, Yale University. New Haven, Connecticut. 5
- Hackett, Allan, Minister, Union Memorial Church. Honolulu, Hawaii. 5
- Hall, H. Carlton, Membership Secretary, Y.M.C.A. Providence, Rhode Island. 9
- Harrison, Carlton, General Secretary, Y.M.C.A. Baltimore, Maryland. 8
- Harrison, Shelby M., former General Director, Russell Sage Foundation. New York, New York. 1
- Hollister, Warner H., Executive, Flatbush Branch, Y.M.C.A. Brooklyn, New York. 9
- Johnson, F. Ernest, Executive, Department of Research and Education, Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America. New York, New York. 1
- Johnston, J. Harold, Director, New Jersey Hospital Association. Trenton, New Jersey. 1
- Knowles, Archie S., Boys' Work Secretary, Y.M.C.A. Hartford, Connecticut. 4
- Lee, Charles E., General Secretary, Y.M.C.A. Springfield, Massachusetts. 1, 4, 8, 9  
(Mr. Lee served as Chairman of Committees 4 and 9)

\* Since retired.

- Marshall, Wesley J., Membership Secretary, Harlem Branch, Y.M.C.A. New York, New York. 9
- Miller, J. Quinter, Associate General Secretary, Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America. New York, New York. 10
- Miller, Robert H., General Secretary, Y.M.C.A. Reading, Pennsylvania. 4, 9
- Nelson, Emery M., formerly General Secretary, Y.M.C.A. Chester, Pennsylvania. 6  
(Currently, World Youth Fund, International Committee, Y.M.C.A.)
- Nicholls, Arthur B., Executive Director, Bronx Union Branch, Y.M.C.A. New York, New York. 8\*
- O'Melia, John C., General Secretary, Y.M.C.A. Olean, New York. 4
- Pepper, Canon Almon R., National Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church. New York, New York. 6
- Pierrel, Gren O., General Secretary, Y.M.C.A. Providence, Rhode Island. 8
- Rosecrance, Frank C., Associate Dean, School of Education, New York University. New York, New York. 1
- Sanderson, Ross W., Committee on Co-operative Field Research, and Home Missions Council, Congregational Church. New York, New York. 1, 8  
(Dr. Sanderson served as Chairman of Committee 8)
- Sanford, Otis R., Long Lines Department, Executive Offices, AT&T. New York, New York. 9  
(Chairman, Membership Services Committee, National Board)
- Schloerb, Rolland W., Minister, Hyde Park Baptist Church. Chicago, Illinois. 5  
(Chairman, Committee on Christian Emphasis and Method, National Board)
- Shumway, George A., Research Secretary, Y.M.C.A. New York, New York. 9
- Sibley, Harper, Chairman, International Committee, Y.M.C.A. Rochester, New York. 5
- Sibley, H. Norman, Minister, University Heights Presbyterian Church, New York, New York. 8
- Sizoo, Joseph R., President, Rutgers Theological Seminary, New Brunswick, New Jersey. 5
- Sproul, J. Edward, Senior Executive, Program Services, National Board, Y.M.C.A. New York, New York. 1, 10
- Swift, Arthur L., Jr., Professor of Church and Community, Union Theological Seminary, New York, New York. 1, 5, 6  
(Dr. Swift has long served as Chairman of the Bureau Committee, and served also as Chairman of Study 6)
- Totton, Frank M., Vice-President, Chase National Bank and President of the Y.M.C.A. New York, New York. 5  
(Mr. Totton served as Chairman of Committee 5)
- Tullis, Richard H., General Secretary, Y.M.C.A. Schenectady, New York. 5\*\*
- Van Vleck, Joseph, Formerly Hartford Theological Seminary. Hartford, Connecticut. 1
- Urice, Jay A., Executive Secretary, National Board, Y.M.C.A. New York. 1
- Wiley, S. Wirt, Chairman, Y.M.C.A. Research Council. Newtown, Connecticut. 1, 5, 7

---

\* Since retired.

\*\* Deceased.









UNIVERSAL  
LIBRARY



134 536

UNIVERSAL  
LIBRARY